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Emmanuel V. Marmaras

Planning London for the Post-War Era 1945–1960

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Planning London for the Post-War Era 1945–1960

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ISSN 2194-315X ISSN 2194-3168 (electronic)
ISBN 978-3-319-07646-1 ISBN 978-3-319-07647-8 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-07647-8

Library of Congress Control Number: 2014946183

Springer Cham Heidelberg New York Dordrecht London

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*In memory of Anthony R. Sutcliffe,
tutor and friend*

Foreword

A book on the planning and reconstruction of London in the Second World War and immediate post-war years by a Greek town planner must come, at first sight, as a surprise, especially to the British planning community. Yet, this is a testimony to the immense international impact that the British planning experience of the 1940s had on planners and urbanists. This was a period of momentous innovation in the history of urban planning and also of genuine moral value. It was an idealistic beacon which guided for several years those who believed in the reforming character of town planning and its potential to change the lives of citizens in those societies who were coming out of the trials of the war years and were striving to stand on their feet in spite of the devastating damage they had incurred. Its influence in countries all over the world was enormous.

I remember to this day that when I myself decided to leave Greece in the late 1960s and start postgraduate studies in planning, the choice of England was the obvious one to make. The fame of the planning of London and of New Town experiments was such that I could not resist the appeal. I knew already the work of Ebenezer Howard and a book on Letchworth was among my readings when I was preparing myself for a British Council scholarship examination. So was Patrick Abercrombie's standard work on town planning or on his Greater London plan. Having grown up in a city like Athens which had also greatly suffered during the war, I could not hide my admiration when I realized that a plan was being prepared for London while the city was being bombed, for implementation after the end of the war. The faith and stamina embodied in this task was something that could only generate enthusiasm for the moral power of a professional field that had captured my imagination. But there were other reasons for my choice of country for post-graduate work of lesser glamour. I remember having already read about the efforts to record and classify land uses all over Britain and a book by Dudley Stamp on applied geography was also among my readings. So was Patrick Geddes's classical work and Lewis Keeble's book on the practice of town and country planning.

Although I was also impressed by the French school of *Aménagement du Territoire* and regional development, I was convinced that the British planning tradition and its reformist roots was a magnet whose attraction I could not escape.

My years in England and London in particular extended my realization that the deep social roots of the planning movement in the interwar years and especially in the 1940s enhanced its moral value and mission. This was a movement which in spite of its undoubted technical and material achievements on the ground was even more distinguished for its social origins which went back even to the nineteenth century. There was an idealistic streak there which added an almost magical quality. I found out that even in the day-to-day work carried out in the London County Council there was a moral element which placed it on a higher plane, especially when compared to later-day commercial urbanism. Curiously, it was another Greek planner, the late Paul Kriesis, who had worked in the LCC, who opened my eyes to this dimension of planning in London. I became more and more convinced that planning and planning legislation of the 1940s was a unique product of an idealistic age. Although circumstances have naturally changed, in Britain as elsewhere, key concepts remain. I catch myself even today, while working in today's Greece, to resort to such concepts in order to explain my positions to Greek, much younger, colleagues. This is the reason why I agree with the ideas expressed by Emmanuel V. Marmaras in this book, as he throws light on the achievements, and of course failures, I hint at in this foreword. And this is why I do not find it surprising that a planner from the other extreme of Europe embarked on the task to write a Ph.D. thesis, and now a book, on the planning of London in a period of captivating intellectual ferment.

When I returned from England to Greece in the 1980s, I found Emmanuel V. Marmaras in the last stage of a doctoral thesis at the National Technical University of Athens. It was later, as I came to know him better that he discussed with me his intention to go to England for further postgraduate work, particularly connected with the history of town planning. I remember that it was I who mentioned to him the work of Prof. Anthony Sutcliffe, who later became Emmanuel's supervisor for this doctoral research in England. Since then, and after his return from England with a second Ph.D. in his CV, which is the basis of this book, I followed closely his academic career as professor first in the University of the Aegean and then in the Technical University of Crete. On a number of occasions I had the opportunity to discuss with him his interests and his research. It was thus that he made me the honour to ask me to write this foreword.

In our discussions over the years, and especially recently, I became acquainted with another passion of his. Emmanuel is a passionate traveller and this passion took him to remote countries and places around the globe, in all continents. This is another of his qualities which probably explains why he, a Greek planner, decided to write on London and its reconstruction, a subject visited by many distinguished British planners and planning historians. I am delighted that he did because he

offers an insight that is different from theirs. It is the view that dominated me too when I first read about that critical period of planning, as I tried to explain in a nutshell. It is a view which, through Emmanuel's carefully documented analysis, is still characterized by the wish of a non-British academic and professional to pay tribute to a planning experiment and achievement which will always remain a valuable inheritance to the international community of planners.

April 2014

Louis Wassenhoven
Ph.D. (London) and Professor Emeritus
National Technical University of Athens

Preface

This book has its origins in a Ph.D. thesis, entitled *Central London under Reconstruction Policy and Planning, 1940–1959*, completed in 1993 and submitted at the University of Leicester, under the supervision of the recently deceased Professor Anthony R. Sutcliffe (1945–2011). The thesis contains more reference material and a longer bibliography than the present work. I have made substantial changes in the main text also, and added much new narrative.

London planning during and just after the Second World War was an enormous task. In spite of the war disasters, new ideas and aspects were tested, legislation and public administration were introduced to match the work evolved. In this context, the foundation of the British Planning System was established, dominated and influenced the world scene for the coming decades. The participation and mobilisation of local authorities, planners, architects and other professional groups and the public enthusiasm followed the exhibitions and debates of London reconstruction plans. One could argue that here lay the origins of the increasingly interdisciplinary nature of planning and the inclusion of more actors in a pluralist procedure.

The aim of the book is to recreate the atmosphere following step by step the arguments and the events at various political, socio-economic and technical levels. It also endeavours to contribute in the understanding of the succeeding developments in terms of planning theory and practice. It deals with the formation of the post-Second World War reconstruction and planning machinery in Great Britain as well as, with the re-planning efforts undertaken in post-war London and in particular the redevelopment programme regarding its central area in the form of the comprehensive development projects.

Planning London For The Post-War Era is structured into four Parts. Part I, titled ‘The Reconstruction Question’, deals with the main problems raised in the big British urban agglomerations before the Second World War and because of the Second World War destructions. Part II, on ‘The Preparation of Planning Machinery’ explores the administrative and statutory developments in town planning matters during the period 1940–1959; the contradiction between private interests and public sector emerges here. Part III is named ‘Re-planning London’ and presents the plans proposed for London as a whole from independent and

official organisations during the 1940s and the 1950s. Finally, Part IV of 'Redeveloping Central London', examines the suggested comprehensive projects for the rebuilding of the City of London and for specific areas of Central London that suffered from bombing. Although these projects introduced innovations concerning the control of urban densities, and the hygiene of residence and office accommodation in the city centre, they failed to achieve one of their main targets, which were the practical unification of both districts of Central London located at the north and the south banks of the Thames.

In addition, the approach in this book brings new material from original sources and sheds light on hidden sides of this era, which influenced international planning developments. It also introduces a document representing events and decisions as a part of the Second World War reality. Such material is essential for any future historiography of that period.

Athens, March 2014

Emmanuel V. Marmaras

Acknowledgments

I started dealing with the reconstruction of British towns and cities in October 1986, on the occasion of a research programme in which I participated at the University of Sheffield, under the direction of Anthony R. Sutcliffe. The programme was titled 'The reconstruction of bombed British cities after the Second World War'. On this initial stage, I had been supported financially by an education leave given by the Public Corporation for Urban Development and Housing (DEPOS), Athens, and by an award granted by the British Council, Athens, for post-doctoral studies at the University of Sheffield. I am indebted to both organisations and I wish to make a special acknowledgment.

I feel grateful to Anthony R Sutcliffe. In particular, I acknowledge my indebtedness to him, not only for having introduced me to British history, society and planning thought, but because under his constructive criticism, patient and friendly supervision, my Ph.D. was completed; this is the reason that this book is dedicated to his memory.

Additionally, I want to thank Louis Wassenhoven, now Emeritus Professor at the National Technical University of Athens, not only because he co-supervised my Ph.D., but also for having consulted me in crucial facets of the British planning system and for encouraging and helping me to come in contact with the British academia and, of course, because he accepted to write the Foreword of this book. Last but not least, I would like to express my appreciation to late Professor Gordon E Cherry (external examiner), and to Dr. David S Nash (internal examiner) for their constructive observations during the viva of my Ph.D. thesis.

Even more, I would like to thank Sir Hugh Casson, Architect and Member of the Royal Academy, for spending with me many hours in discussions on matters of the post-war London reconstruction in Athens and in London. I also thank the late Thales Argyropoulos, FRTPI, Professor at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, for having given me valuable information from his own experience on the redevelopment of Central London, and for having provided me with journals and other materials from his personal library.

Moreover, I would like to acknowledge the staff of all libraries where I made my research, and in particular those people of the then Public Record Office in Kew

Gardens, London, for helping me in gathering the needed material. I owe my gratitude to Athena J Wallace, Architect NTU Athens, Town Planner AA London, for having read through the draft of this book, making useful remarks in the final form after my further working out of the original and completion with new material. I wish also to thank Dr. Despina Dimelli, Assistant Professor at the Technical University of Crete, for helping me in the preparation of figures included in the book. Last but not least, I want to thank Springer for their decision to publish this book.

Certainly, none of these people are responsible for the analysis presented in this book nor for any factual inaccuracies it may contain, hence, all responsibility for the following text lies fully with the author.

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Abbreviations

AA	Architectural Association
A'J	The Architects' Journal
AJTPC	Advisory Joint Town Planning Committee
AMCE	Association of Municipal and County Engineers
AMCS	Association of Municipal and County Surveyors
ARGIT	Architectural Research Group in Toronto
B	Borough
BEA	British European Airways
CB	County Borough
CIAM	Congres Internationeaux des Architectes Modernes
CLB	Central Land Board
CLD	County of London Development (plan)
CLDP	County of London Development Plan
CLURA	Committee on Land Utilisation in Rural Areas
CPO	Compulsory Purchase Order
DF	Daylight Factor
DLT	Development Land Tax
FSI	Floor Space Index
GL	Greater London
ITPC	Improvements and Town Planning Committee
LCC	London County Council
LRRC	London Regional Reconstruction Committee
MARS	Modern Architects' Research Society
MB	Metropolitan Borough
MLGP	Minister of Local Government and Planning
MP	Member of Parliament
MTCP	Ministry of Town and Country Planning
OBE	Order of British Empire
PLA	Port of London Authority
PR	Plot Ratio

PRO	Public Record Office
RA	Royal Academy
RAPC	Royal Academy Planning Committee
RCDIP	Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population
RDC	Rural District Council
RFAC	Royal Fine Art Commission
RIBA	Royal Institute of British Architects
RTPI	Royal Town Planning Institute
TCPA	Town and Country Planning Association
TPI	Town Planning Institute
UD	Urban District
UDC	Urban District Council
UN	United Nations
USA	United States of America

About the Author

Emmanuel V. Marmaras was born in Athens in 1947. He studied Architecture at the National Technical University of Athens (NTUA). His main research interests include urban and planning history, architectural history, built environment, town planning and urban geography.

In 1986, he was awarded a doctorate by the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the NTUA, School of Architecture; in 1993, he received a Ph.D. degree from the Faculty of Social Sciences (Department of Economic and Social History) at the University of Leicester.

He was a professor at the Department of Geography of the University of the Aegean (1996–2006), and head of the Department (2002–2004); he also was professor at the Department of Architectural Engineering of the Technical University of Crete (2006–2012) and head of the Department (2010–2012). He had taught in the following post-graduate programmes: “Management of the Cultural Heritage” at the National Capodestrian University of Athens, “Geography and Planning in Europe and the Mediterranean” at the University of the Aegean and “Statistical Methods in Real Estate” at the Athens University of Economics. In addition, he served as chairman of the Hellenic Planning and Urban History Association (2003–2006).

Marmaras has written a considerable number of articles in Greek and international scholarly journals. He has also published the following books: *The Urban Apartment Building in Interwar Athens: The beginning of the intensive exploitation of urban land* (The Technological Cultural Foundation of ETVA, 1991, in Greek), *Planning and Urban Space: Theoretical approaches and facets of Hellenic urban geography* (Ellinika Grammata Editions, 2002, in Greek), *Twelve Greek Architects of the Interwar Period* (Crete University Press, 2005, bilingual (Greek–English) in cooperation with another author), *The Mont Parnes Hotel: A story of mountain architecture* (The Kerkyra Editions, 2007, in Greek), finally, *For the Architecture and Town Planning of Athens* (the Papazisis Editions, 2012, in Greek). Further, he is also the author of three travel books in Greek titled: *Journeys in the Mediterranean* (Anavasi Editions, 2002), *Forgotten Mountains* (Ellinika Grammata Editions, 2005), *Journeys in Places of Vikings* (Papazisis Editions, 2007).

Chapter 1

Introduction

The period of London planning during the Second World War is an appealing era, where in spite of the war disasters, new ideas and aspects of the Modern Movement were tested, legislation and public administration to match the task evolved, laying the foundation for the establishment of the British planning system which dominated and influenced the world for the coming decades. One must stress though that since the paradigm of this period was far from planning ideas and ideologies introduced in later decades including public participation, multi-cultural communities, minorities and gender analysis. Strong criticism has been expressed during the last decades by various writers on the inadequacy of modernist planning (Sandercock 1998). Nevertheless, one could argue that through the participation and mobilisation of local authorities, planners, architects and other professional groups and the public enthusiasm that followed the exhibitions and debates of London reconstruction plans, lay the origins of the increasingly interdisciplinary nature of planning and the inclusion of more actors in a pluralist procedure. The goal of the book is to recreate the atmosphere following step by step the arguments and the events at various political, socio-economic and technical levels. It also endeavours to contribute in the understanding of the succeeding developments in terms of planning theory and practice.

Town Planning was considered during that period as a set of concepts, ideas and legislative rules, which was tested and effectively developed through the given opportunities of implementation in real conditions. Nevertheless, Town Planning has its roots in the Industrial Revolution era and the social reform movement that followed; it was to become institutionalised in the twentieth-century welfare state (Hall et al. 1973, vol 1, p. 92). It could be characterised as a top-down inspired planning process. Of course, this aspect has been superseded by more progressive approaches putting forward public participation as a main factor in the planning procedure. Nevertheless, the fervent involvement of various actors in the planning of London coming from the British society in the form of local committees and professional lobbies could be argued as the precursor of that which was named later the bottom-up planning conception. Anyway, the town planning profession as

considered by Gordon Cherry was a branch of applied social science, rooted in a living tradition of social reform (Hebbert 2006, p. 234). Among such opportunities are especially those which arise after an extended disaster in a country. In fact, the effects of a physical calamity or war destruction will require a great national reconstruction effort.

In its widest sense, the term Reconstruction refers to the economic, as well as to the social, moral and physical revival of a country. As a consequence, the establishment of a central machinery at that time must be considered as a basic necessity in order to realise an extensive reconstruction programme. In this context, the re-planning and re-building of the large and the small cities of this country became a major component of this reconstruction activity (Larkham and Pendlebury 2008).

The Second World War was undoubtedly the most disastrous event in the twentieth-century European History. The need for reconstruction of the countries of Europe immediately after the end of the hostilities was evident. This reconstruction, of course, took place, but the manner by which each country responded to the question was different from the others; mainly because of its economic capabilities, as well as the local conditions which prevailed. Among these post-war reconstruction cases, the British one presented an additional particularity, in that the reconstruction machinery was organised more or less entirely during the wartime period. This could be explained by the fact that Britain was one of the few European countries which participated throughout the war and simultaneously remained unoccupied during this period. Additionally, this country had the experience of the First World War, when British reconstruction planning had also started before the end of the war.

As a result, Britain had been possible to prepare the reconstruction plans for the post-war era systematically and in an uninterrupted way. The advantages were significant when peace came, for the machinery of the whole reconstruction activity was available. But, as this process was very close to the political ideology of that period, Cullingworths view (1975, p. 11), that “the essence is political even when issues are defined in technical terms”, is accepted as the crucial methodological basis in order to approach the planning developments.

Admittedly, there is a wider agreement among historians and practitioners that the Second World War marked an important new stage in the development of urban and regional planning in Britain. Indications of a new enthusiasm for planning coincided with the first heavy air raids on London and the bib provincial centres, in the autumn and early winter of 1940. Anyway, the main stimulus to the new planning thought was the destruction caused by the raids. It was widely felt that extensive urban areas, particularly in the city centres, would need to *be planned* under the aegis of central and/or local government, rather than left to the free play of the market. Quite quickly, the debate broadened out from the simple reconstruction of bombed buildings and districts to the re-planning of the cities as a whole, and even of the regions around them. However, the roots of the post-war evolution in London could be traced in the previous period and specifically in the conditions created by the Great Depression.

In this context, the re-planning and re-building of London became a burning question of the British political and social life. Especially, the debate on London concentrated very soon in the interest of the private sector, which aimed to participate in the speculative opportunities generated by reconstruction activity, and simultaneously, in the attempts of the various collective institutions and bodies to bring about, in some way, the “rational” development of it. This clash of approaches was typified in the endeavour, undertaken mainly by the London County Council, to upgrade the south part of London’s central area, that is, the districts located on the South Bank of Thames. This significant but neglected episode will receive particular attention in this book.

The book deals primarily with the formation of the British reconstruction and planning machinery, and after with the re-planning efforts undertaken in London and especially the redevelopment programme which developed in its central area in the form of the *comprehensive* development projects. The latter was in the centre of planning practice of that period.

Our central hypothesis is that, although the planning thought, legislation and technique realised significant evolutionary steps by introducing important innovative instruments and bold planning concepts, the re-building of London’s central areas was not a success to a comparable degree. This divergence between concept, plan and result was due to the difficulties faced during the implementation stage as an outcome of mainly financial problems and shortcomings owed to the decision making system at the higher level, without having a larger popular support, thus exposing the decisions to governmental changes.

In order to assess the value of post-war British reconstruction activity, this will be examined at two levels: primarily, as a system of conceptualisation and implementation in the context of the historical circumstances, and secondly in each of the above sectors separately. It is expected that through this examination, the proper arguments will occur to understand the phenomenon of the reconstruction of London during the first post-war years. Indeed, this principle will be the methodological basis. In practical terms, the present work is structured in four Parts.

Part I attempts to respond to the following questions: What were the main problems raised in the big British urban agglomerations in town planning terms and which were the needs that led to redevelopment, especially of the central urban areas? Lastly, what were the main innovations of planning theory and technique which facilitated the redevelopment of London and the central areas of the country?

In Part II the following questions are searched: On the one hand, what were the main arguments used on the debate on the necessary urban reconstruction and the formation of a new planning urban machinery in the pre-war and the war years followed by the most important administrative and statutory developments which occurred during the wartime period? And on the other, what was the town planning legislative work produced by the Coalition Government of the 1940–1945 period and what were the legislative innovations introduced by the highly innovative Town and Country Planning Act 1947, passed by the first post-war Labour Government, as well as the reactions to them by the various organised interests of British society?

Part III tries to answer the following questions: First, what was the general framework of central governmental policy in relation to the re-planning of the London area and how did the various private institutions react to the need to re-plan London? Secondly, what were the main features and proposals of the London County Council prepared by JH Forshaw and P Abercrombie, of the Greater London plan prepared by Patrick Abercrombie and of the County of London plan prepared by the Town Planning Committee of the London County Council? Lastly, what were the influences and the consequences of the above planning proposals on the reconstruction of London?

Finally, Part IV addresses the following: What were the primary ideas and proposals prepared in the post-1940 period regarding the re-planning of the City of London and especially of the Holden-Holford plan published in 1947? Lastly, what were the main projects and the degree of their successful implementation for comprehensive redevelopment of central areas in London sited on both banks of the Thames?

The book ends with a conclusion summing up the British reconstruction experience of the 1940s and 1950s, and the general characteristics of this activity, considered from a town planning and architectural viewpoint.

The main sources of material upon which the research work was based can be divided into three major categories. The first of them was the archives of the then Public Record Office (PRO), now National Archives; 225 PRO files were investigated referring to urban and economic reconstruction of British cities, and especially of London. The second source was the contemporary specialist press, and notably: *The Architects' Journal*, for the time period from 1938 to 1959; *The Journal of the Town Planning Institute*, for the time period from 1954 to 1963; and *The Town Planning Review*, for the time period from 1937 to 1961. The third source was composed of books, papers and other secondary literature, most of them published in the 1940–1959 period, but including later material published up to the present day. An additional list of sources is provided in the “Further Reading” section.

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Part I
The Reconstruction Question

Chapter 2

British Town Planning on the Eve of the Second World War

Abstract This chapter is dealing with the situation of Town Planning in Britain during the end of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. A summary of the socio-economic context following the Great Depression, of the ideas of the pioneering planners, and of the procedure of the “Planning Acts” as it had developed by 1939 are examined. The absence of planning schemes resulted in an entirely piecemeal development leading to growing concern about the quality of the British townscape. Another issue was the “compensation and betterment” question, perceived to be most difficult where the central values were at their highest.

Our aim here is to identify the situation of British town planning on the eve of the Second World War. The approach is based on the view that town planning is both, an expression of a utopian idealism which attempts to attain the “perfect world” and the “ideal city” (Cherry 1974, p. 6), and the product of an effort to minimize frictional effects in the land and building market, achieving minimum environmental standards. It follows from this definition, and its historical context, that a summary of the ideas of the pioneering planners, and of the procedure of the “Planning Acts”, as it had developed by 1939, will provide a satisfactory foundation for a consideration of the British town planning inheritance on the eve of the Second World War.

Ebenezer Howard’s concept of the self-financing, medium-sized cities of about 30,000 people, sited in open countryside and surrounded by a large “green belt” was published in his book *Tomorrow, The Peaceful Path to Real Reform* in 1898 and re-issued in 1902 as *Garden Cities of Tomorrow*. The basis of its appeal was the Le Playist belief of the importance of the interaction between environment and society (Buder 1990, pp. 64–77; Meller 1995, p. 303). It is often regarded as the most influential idea and the most decisive contribution in the creation of the British Planning System in the twentieth century (Hall 1985, p. 44). Besides the foundation of the first Garden City at Letchworth in 1903, and the adaptation of the village-like residential scale to the creation of a conventional suburb (Abercrombie 1943, p. 99) by the establishment of the Garden Suburb at Hampstead in north-west London between 1905 and 1909, the major influence of Howard’s ideas lay more in

growing concern about land use, urban layout and house design (Stevenson 1984, p. 231). Architects and planners—such as Raymond Unwin, Barry Parker, Patrick Abercrombie, Frederick Osborn and Patrick Geddes—, expanded and applied the Garden City concept and combined it with foreign ideas to produce a distinctive British planning movement, although it was considered by Patrick Abercrombie (Abercrombie 1943, p. 98) as the implementation of the English ideal of low-density garden and house type of residential planning. Anyway, the Garden City idea prompted enough achievement in Britain to justify the survival and further development of the idea into the 1940s (Sutcliffe 1990, p. 258).

The foundation of the British Urban and Regional Planning System could be considered as an accumulating corpus of legislation contained in a series of “Planning Acts”, beginning with the Housing, Town Planning, etc. Act, 1909 (Sutcliffe 1981, p. 86). This Act was a moderate and realistic measure which made town planning powers available to local government within four years of the coinage of the term “town planning” and within less than a decade of the first importation of the town planning idea from Germany. In practice, and although Parliament and the people expected the Act of 1909 to be used to promote development of the “garden city type”, it basically allowed urban authorities to lay down the pattern of main streets, to set aside land for open space and public buildings, and to fix densities and house types in the residential districts (Sutcliffe 1981, p. 82; Sutcliffe 1988, p. 301).

The Housing and Town Planning Act, 1919 followed. Even though, it was made national and compulsory, it did little in practice to broaden the basis of town planning. Practically, town planning was exercised on only a small scale, though since 1920, it had been supervised by a special Department of the Ministry of Health (Ashworth 1965, p. 212). That type of town planning was not formally separated from housing until the passage of the Town Planning Act, 1925, which was a consolidating measure (Sheail 1985, p. 344). It was succeeded by the Town and Country Planning Act, 1932, in which the aspect that the countryside needed planning as much as towns, and the resulting concept of “town and country planning”, was embodied. This important Act made it possible in principle for all building development in England and Wales, whether in town or country, to be made subject to planning control (Cherry 1988, p. 92). However, effective control was dependent on the existence of statutory plans, and in this respect there were serious deficiencies as late as 1939. For example, there is no question that the failure to relieve the problems created or aggravated by suburban development was largely due to inadequate town planning. This failure can be attributed to two factors: defective legislation and the apathy of the planning authorities (Richardson and Aldcroft 1968, p. 316).

In the meanwhile, the socio-economic framework had changed worldwide and in Britain especially it was the phenomenon of the Great Depression. The Great Depression in Britain, also known as the “Great Slump”, was a period of national economic recession in the 1930s, which had its origins in the global Great Depression. It was Britain’s largest and most profound economic crisis of the twentieth century, it originated in the United States in late 1929 and quickly spread

to the world. Since Britain had never experienced the boom that had characterised the USA, Germany, Canada and Australia in the 1920s, the repercussions were less severe (Richardson 1969, pp. 3–19). Britain's world trade fell by half (1929–1933), the output of heavy industry fell by a third, employment profits plunged in nearly all sectors. At the depth in summer 1932, registered unemployed numbered 3.5 million, and many more had only part-time employment. Particularly, hardest hit by economic problems were the industrial and mining areas in the north of England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. Unemployment reached 70 % in some areas at the start of the 1930s (with more than 3 million out of work nationally) and many families depended entirely on payments from local government known as the dole.

In the 1930s government interest in planning was further stimulated by the depression and the start of a new war in Europe. There was a new interest in regional economic planning to alleviate the effects of the depression, and in industrial dispersal from the cities to protect industry from possible air attacks in a new war. In city planning terms the Great Depression triggered the interest in the broader picture of geographical patterns of urban growth instead of the individual city. It was also the first time that the great divide between industrial areas hard hit by the economic recession and others that survived the shock was acknowledged. Central Scotland, the North-East and South Wales were hard hit, while London, Leicester and Birmingham survived (Hall et al. 1973, vol I, pp. 85 and 105).

Early in 1937, Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain appointed a Royal Commission on the Geographical Distribution of the Industrial Population, under the chairmanship of Sir Anderson Montague Barlow. It reported in January 1940, and it proved to be the most important single influence in the creation of the modern British Planning System (Hall 1989, p. 33). As a matter of fact, the whole British problem in the context of the distribution of industrial population, forced such ideas, as the *decentralisation* of the population on the one hand, and on the other, the *containment* of the urban areas. On this subject are very well known the works of Frederick Osborne (*New Towns after the War*) (1942) and of Peter Hall et al. (*The containment of Urban England*) (1973) respectively. Furthermore, the idea of the “Green Belt” (*Green-belt cities, The British Contribution*, by Osborne 1946) was introduced to help in the attempt of containment of urban areas. The New Towns, built by the Development Corporation under the New Towns Act, 1946, became the main instrument of the decentralisation policy in Britain; in Greater London eight New Towns were established between 1946 and 1949 (Hall et al. 1973, vol II, p. 334). Underlying this evolution was hidden the concept of “national balance”. The concentration of such a large proportion of the national population in Greater London constituted a serious drain on the rest of the country (Hall 1989, p. 34).

At this point, it is necessary to examine the conditions which influenced positively or negatively the actual use of the new planning powers in the 1930s. For this, two subjects must be analysed in a more detailed way: the first subject is housing needs, and the second one is the road traffic question in the large urban agglomerations.

As far as housing is concerned, a corpus of legislation had built up since the middle of the nineteenth century. Well in advance of the passing of the 1909

Planning Act, local authorities had been provided with extensive powers to clear and replace slum housing, and eventually to provide new housing to meet general needs, unconnected with clearance schemes. The outstanding statutes were the Artisans' and Labourers' Dwellings Improvement Act, 1875, which permitted the demolition of entire districts of slums and their reconstruction with new housing, and the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890, which facilitated the construction of housing for general needs (Wohl 1977). Indeed, town planning was at first seen in legislative terms as an extension of the housing power, which explains why the 1909 planning powers were presented to Parliament as part of a housing Bill. However, since 1919, and after the passing of the Housing and Town Planning Act, a new impetus had been given to the production of housing schemes, mainly through a system of central government subsidies and a requirement that local authorities formally assess their housing needs. It was estimated that at least 800.000 houses were needed to replace the slums and make up arrears of house-building from the First World War years, while in 1918 there were 610.000 fewer than families (Stevenson 1984, p. 221).

In 1924, the Wheatley Housing Act increased the State subsidy for houses built for rent (Stevenson 1984, p. 222). However, little had been done to tackle the twin "evils" of that period that is of *slum clearance* and *overcrowding*. It is estimated that between 1875 and 1930 probably less than 200.000 people had been removed from slum areas and re-housed. The main attempt to face the above twofold housing problem started after the passing of the Housing Act, 1930, which introduced a new subsidy system specifically for slum clearance. It was related not to the number of houses built, but to the number of persons displaced and re-housed. This boost for slum clearance was supplemented by a policy for the relief of overcrowding, initiated by the Housing Act, 1935 (Richardson and Aldcroft 1968, pp. 179, 180 and 185). On the basis of local authority returns, it was estimated that 3.8 % (341.000) of the dwellings inspected were overcrowded and that the worst areas in England and Wales were in the East End of London and in north-east England (Cherry 1974, p. 106).

As Harry Richardson and Derek Aldcroft argued (1968, p. 187), the achievements of the new policy in the 1930s were hardly spectacular, and by 1939 only the fringe of the problem had been attacked. Altogether barely 375.000 new houses had been built specifically for the purpose of abolishing the slums and overcrowded dwellings. Most of the houses were built in the form of quite extensive suburban council housing estates, which needed—though they did not always receive—careful planning. Whether the building of housing estates reinforced or undermined town planning as such, depended on local circumstances. Normally, the housing estates were planned and built by architects from the Public Works Department, and not by the—usually very small—town planning staff. Sometimes, liaison between the two groups was close, but in other cases the town planning staff found that they were virtually excluded of essential information. The potential dissension was exacerbated after 1930, when local authorities in the large urban areas turned to slum clearance and reconstruction under the encouragement of the Housing Act, 1930. Alison Ravetz believes that (1974, p. 123), this Act facilitated procedures for

clearance and introduced a new Exchequer subsidy which was increased when re-housing was done in flats over three storeys on expensive sites.

Regarding the road planning question and its legislative correlation with town planning, the affinity is comparable to that between housing and town planning. Actually, since the arrival of the railways in the 1830s, road traffic had been so reduced that roads outside the urban areas had scarcely attracted the attention of the legislator. Suddenly, all this began to change with the arrival of the motor vehicle from about 1900. The development of statistical data referring to the production of motor vehicles during the inter-war years indicates the rapid rate of change. Britain had produced just 34,000 motor vehicles of all kinds in 1913; however, by 1924 the figure had risen to 146,000, and by 1937 it had reached 507,000. At the same time, in 1914 there were only 140,000 motor vehicles of all kinds in Britain, by 1931 the figure was 1,500,000, and by 1939, 3,000,000, 2,000,000 of which were private vehicles (Stevenson 1984, pp. 110 and 130).

In administrative terms, in the early 1900s the county authorities were still weak and inexperienced; road problems were tackled in the countryside by a powerful central government department, the Board of Trade. In this context, the government set up the Royal Commission on London Traffic which deliberated from 1903 to 1905. The Commission emphasised the need for road widening, for uniformity of building laws and bye-laws to control new development, and for local authorities to define frontages and ensure that new development did not hamper the provision of new roads. Next, the London Traffic Branch of the Board of Trade was set up in 1906, to advise the government on all matters concerning “locomotion, transport and traffic” (Thomson 1969, pp. 94–95). The problem in London was that many of the outer suburbs, and the outlying free-standing towns, lay outside the boundaries of the London County Council (LCC), making effective road planning by the LCC impossible.

Thus, very early in the twentieth century, the Board of Trade came to take the initiative in road planning for the whole London area, including the County of London. A number of major improvement schemes were suggested for the central area as well; an east-west avenue on the line Bayswater Road—City—Whitechapel and a similar North-South route from Holloway to the Elephant and Castle were the most important ones. However, Board of Trade intervention was not normally direct, for the county authorities were statutorily responsible for main roads within their areas until 1937, when the Trunk Roads Act transferred 4,500 miles of main roads from the local authorities to the Ministry of Transport, which had been established as a new Ministry in 1919, assuming the Board of Trade’s road responsibilities. J Michael Thomson argued that (1969, pp. 95, 96 and 98), at that time one could find the following pattern of progress which occurred regularly in road planning in London: (i) growing complaints about traffic congestion; (ii) production of an ambitious plan; (iii) modification of the plan to meet objections on grounds of cost and amenity, and (iv) implementation of the modified plan.

The above road traffic situation had variable implications for town planning. Normally, the county authorities could be relied on to ensure that a major radial artery running out of a county borough was continued beyond the city boundary by

a compatible road, and the coordination of urban and county road plans was often assured by the regional planning machinery which could be set up under the Housing, Town Planning Act, 1919 and later enactments. Peter Hall supported that (1985, p. 84), the need for regional/local planning was already coming to be recognised when Geddes was writing in 1915, but the need for national/regional planning only became fully evident in the aftermath of the Great Depression of 1929–1932. In areas where the joint town planning committee was not in existence, or where it was ineffective, the Ministry of Transport was willing to intervene directly to bring the county and county borough authorities together, to secure the coordination of their road plans. However, the national framework of road planning helped to keep road planning in the urban areas in the hands of the City Engineer, with the detailed work being done by staff in the Public Works Department, rather than by the town planners. With council housing and roads thus in the hands of others, the town planners found the scope of their work severely circumscribed. Admittedly, it promoted effectively the idea that town and country would be better if they were planned as an entity, or as a system.

However, in addition to both of the above factors, one of the greatest environmental disasters of the inter-war years occurred in the form of an urban phenomenon, which was in a way a combination of the traffic and housing developments of that period. This was the so-called *ribbon development*, which is the building of houses along the entire length of the frontages of new main roads, usually by-passes, designed to remove through-traffic from congested urban areas and pretty country towns. These by-passes were normally built by the county road authorities through rural areas to which no town planning powers applied. Thus, there was nothing to stop developers buying up the frontage sites and erecting houses which, because they faced onto an established road, did not incur road charges. The resulting long ribbons of housing, entirely closing in new roads which might otherwise have been landscaped as parkways on the American model, were regarded as undesirable from the social, aesthetic and traffic points of view. Eventually, in 1935, Parliament passed the Restriction of Ribbon Development Act (Ashworth 1965, p. 223). This statute required all new development within 68 m of the middle of a “classified” road to have the approval of the highway authority, together with the creation of any new access to the classified road. These powers prevented the worst ribbon development, but still did not amount to effective, *comprehensive*¹ planning in the vicinity of major roads, as there were uncertainties between the Ministries of Transport and Health, delay over necessary action and ineffectiveness once it had been taken (Cherry 1988, p. 97).

Beside the above developments, a very uneven distribution of town planning schemes across the country had been established, as a product of the approach to planning adopted in the 1909 Act, and enshrined without essential modification in

¹ In particular, this term was used to describe a scheme covering a large area of land whereon a multiplicity of land uses were integrated into a unified scheme of development, comprising roads, traffic planning and car parking, land use, buildings, aesthetics and landscaping.

later enactments. In practice, planning schemes were more likely to be in existence for suburban residential districts developed since 1909, than they were for districts built before 1909, and for industrial districts. The explanation for this uneven and disappointing progress is to be found principally in the failure of the legislature to deal effectively with the perennial problem of *compensation*. It has to be recognised that compensation, together with the related issue of *betterment*, was a complex question, both technically and politically. It was related to a long-running strand of land-reform rhetoric which stretched back through John Stuart Mill to Thomas Spence, and which had received a new injection from across the Atlantic in the later nineteenth century in the form of Henry George's "single tax" proposal. It was this reformist atmosphere which helped to ease the path of the 1909 Planning Act, but it also had the paradoxical effect of weakening the planning clauses. This weakening occurred because when John Burns, the President of the Local Government Board, and his officials at the Board sought advice, principally from the Treasury, on the "compensation and betterment" aspects of town planning schemes, they were told that the broader context of the problem would be tackled in a separate land taxation measure to be brought forward by the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Sutcliffe 1981, pp. 65, 72–75 and 123; Sutcliffe 1988, p. 299). Indeed, a series of land taxes were included in the 1909 Finance Bill, which precipitated the notorious show-down with the House of Lords in 1910.

Meanwhile, the Burns Planning Bill made concessions during its passage through the House of Lords, and the upshot was that local authorities were empowered (by Sect. 58[3]) to recover half the value of any betterment resulting from a planning scheme, and were required to compensate full for any "worsenment" (Ashworth 1965, p. 186). Not only was the arrangement fundamentally unfavourable to the authorities, but the valuation problem was virtually ignored. In practice, the betterment levy proved impossible to enforce, and the threat of compensation undermined the position of the authorities in dealing with the private property owners. In general terms, the "compensation and betterment" provisions were still essentially defective in 1932, and the whole attempt could be characterised as a failure to resolve the fundamental issues of the whole problem.

The "compensation and betterment" question was perceived to be most difficult where the central values were at their highest. In the average British city in 1939, the suburbs were normally partially planned under planning schemes approved since 1909. The inner residential districts of early nineteenth century slums were being cleared and rebuilt under the bye-laws of the 1870–1914 period. Planning schemes were not normally in force in these areas, but the housing was so new that no redevelopment could as yet be envisaged. The industrial areas were gradually consolidating themselves as factory expansions demolishing adjacent housing. This left out the city centres, which were not normally subject to planning schemes, but which in the 1920s, and particularly in the 1930s, were being redeveloped by private enterprise accommodation (Whitehand 1984, pp. 174–200). The result was entirely piecemeal and concern grew about the quality of the British townscape.

At this point, the following questions are arisen: what were the war damages caused in Britain by the enemy's action during the Second World War? What were the special measures introduced concerning the technical formation of the built environment, and in particular that of the central areas?

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Chapter 3

The War Damages and the Problems of Central Areas

Abstract All the aspects of the redevelopment of central areas, in conjunction with the accumulated problems, are examined. Especially, the issues of war damages and the needed urban centres' reconstruction in conjunction with the traffic problems, car parking and shopping needs are considered. Apart from the problem of war damage, redevelopment was necessary in most town centres also for a variety of other reasons since buildings had become outworn and outdated, the town centre had become unable to cope with modern traffic conditions, and it was necessary to provide a new environment for a changed way of living. To these three main reasons, two more were to be added, the movement of functions out of bombed city centres during the war, and the fact that the value of sites in central commercial areas had risen to a high level.

By 1939, the city centres in Britain were well on the way to becoming the principal urban problem, and this state of affairs helps to explain why the planning debate sprang up with such force once the German bombers started to damage precisely those areas (Fig. 3.1). A heaven-sent opportunity, both figuratively and literally, had presented itself. In the revived planning debate, in spite the losses in human and material resources, a collective euphoria was generated in which it was assumed that even the thorniest problems of the past, such as “compensation and betterment”, could find radical solutions.

3.1 The War Damages

Referring to the Second World War destruction, the newspaper *Daily Worker* wrote on 11 September 1945, that The War Damage Commission had been notified of war damage to 3,281,953 separate properties. Notifications were still coming in at the rate of many hundred a week. A huge sum of £271,281,171 had been paid out, but it was impossible to estimate what the final figure would be, as the commission could not foretell building trade costs in the next few years (PRO file ADM 1/19037).

Fig. 3.1 A drawing by Batt JM Dent and Sons Ltd., showing a planner thinking in front of a London map during the Second World War period. (Source Purdom CB, How should we rebuild London?, London, 1946, xii)



According to another PRO document, dated 16 December 1943, the total number of damaged hereditaments in the United Kingdom and England per region was as shown in Tables 3.1 and 3.2.

However, neither the national nor the regional figures necessarily give a true picture in England. 125 totally destroyed houses in Pembrock Dock might involve a larger housing problem than 5,065 totally destroyed houses in Birmingham. Such figures as are available show that there were 155 towns in which there were more than 100 totally destroyed houses, of which 41 towns each had more than 1,000 totally destroyed houses. It is these 41 towns which were popularly known as the “blitzed” towns. 18 of these 41 were metropolitan boroughs, so that treating the London County Council area as one “town” there were 24 “blitzed” towns with more than 1,000 totally destroyed houses (Table 3.3).

Table 3.1 Total number of damaged hereditaments in the United Kingdom

England	2,547,608 of which 2,346,117 were houses	93.45 % of the UK
Scotland	52,152 of which 44,380 were houses	1.75 % of the UK
Wales	71,464 of which 65,379 were houses	2.5 % of the UK
Northern Ireland	63,628 of which 59,897 were houses	2.3 % of the UK

Source PRO file CAB 87/11 (16 December 1943)

Table 3.2 Total number of damaged houses in England by Region

Greater London (Metropolitan Police District)	977,626	42 %
Lancashire and Cheshire (largely S Lancashire and Wirral Peninsula)	334,947	14 %
Birmingham and Coventry Area	197,843	8.5 %
Yorkshire (very largely Hull and Sheffield)	162,351	7 %
Hants and Dorset (largely Southampton and Portsmouth Areas)	125,980	5 %
SW England (very largely Plymouth, Bristol, Bath and Exeter)	131,649	5.5 %
Remainder of England	415,721	18 %
Total	2,346,117	100 %

Source PRO file CAB 87/11 (16 December 1943)

Table 3.3 Totally destroyed houses in the 24 blitzed towns in Britain

Greater London	LCC area	47,314
	West Ham	9,254
	East Ham	1,498
	Willesden	1,079
	Croydon	1,194
	Total	60,339
Merseyside area	Liverpool	5,487
	Bootle	2,006
	Birkenhead	1,899
	Wallasey	1,150
	Total	10,542
Manchester area	Manchester	1,951
	Salford	1,934
	Total	3,885
Individual ports	Plymouth	3,593
	Yarmouth	1,636
	Southampton	4,136
	Portsmouth	4,393
	Hull	4,184
	Bristol	2,909
	Swansea	1,124
	Total	21, 975
Cathedral towns	Bath	1,214
	Norwich	1,780
	Exeter	1,700
	Total	4,694
Inland industrial towns	Coventry	4,185
	Birmingham	5,065
	Sheffield	2,906
	Total	12,156
Grand total		113,591

Source PRO file CAB 87/11

Table 3.4 The estimated area of war damage (except City of London and City of Westminster)

Area	Acres	Area	Acres
Canterbury CB	26	Manchester	61
Chatham MB	11	Salford CB	65
Deal MB	5	Sheffield CB	108
Dover MB	25	South Shields CB	19
Eastbourne CB	15	Stretford M.B	20
Folkestone MB	20	Sunderland CB	40
Gosport B	17	Tynemouth CB	15
Gr.Yarmouth CB	50	Wallasey CB	43
Hastings CB	15	East Han CB	60
Lowestoft MB	15	Croydon CB	50
Margate MB	6	Tottenham B	80
Norwich CB	78	Hornsey B	20
Portsmouth CB	165	Finchley.B	15
Southampton CB	145	Twickenham B	25
Barrow-in-Furness CB	23	Leyton B	45
Birkenhead CB	76	Thurrock UD	20
Bootle CB	83	Walthamstow B	20
Grimsby CB	24	Beckenham B	20
Hull CB	136	Erith B	14
Liverpool CB	208		
Total: 1,863			

Source PRO file HLG 71/34, "Conference of Local Authorities on Reconstruction Problems (October–November 1947)"

Another account of the war damage estimated area for a list of Metropolitan and County Boroughs is given by another PRO document; it was presented in the Conference of Local Authorities on Reconstruction Problems during October–November 1947 (Table 3.4). Even more, in a number of towns a portion of the central area had been destroyed by air attack or many buildings were damaged beyond repair and the commercial and civic life in these towns had been upset. As a response, two Acts, of 1944 and 1947, respectively, defined Declaratory Order Areas and Comprehensive Development Areas (Table 3.5), and provided significant statutory powers for their execution.

However, apart from the problem of war damage, redevelopment was necessary in most town centres also for a variety of other reasons. Wilfred Burns supported that (1962, p. 167) three main reasons applied to most redevelopment areas; the first was that buildings had become outworn and outdated, as a result, great numbers of them had reached the end of their useful life; a second reason was that the town

Table 3.5 Declaratory orders and associated compulsory purchase orders (CPO) in severely bombed cities and towns

Local authority	Declaratory orders made		CPOs confirmed	
	Number	Appr. acreage	Number	Appr. acreage
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
<i>(1) London area</i>				
Beckenham B	1	6		
City of London	1	231		
Erith B	1	9		
Finchley B	1	6		
Hornsey B	1	10		
Leyton B	4 ^a	25	2	6
London C	1	1,312		
Thurrock UDC	1 ^a	4		
Tottenham B	1	39		
Twickenham B	3	21		
TOTAL	15	1,663	2	6
<i>(2) Provincial cities and towns</i>				
Bristol CB	1	247	1	4.5
Coventry CB	1	274	7	5
Deal B	1	4		
Dover B	1	143	2	28
Exeter CB	1	75	2	66
Great Yarmouth CB	1	35		
Grimsby CB	2	55		
Kingston upon Hull CB	2	246		
Liverpool CB	1	46		
Manchester CB	5	74		
Norwich CB	1	41		
Nuneaton B	2	32		
Plymouth CB	7	415	7	142
Portsmouth CB	1	430	2	13
Salford CB	3	17		
Southampton CB	1	261	4	7.5
South Shields CB	1	13	1	3
Swansea CB	1	134	1	26
Torpoint UDC	1	5		
Wallasey CB	1	21		
Weston Super Mare B	1 ^a	7		

(continued)

Table 3.5 (continued)

Local authority	Declaratory orders made		CPOs confirmed	
	Number	Appr. acreage	Number	Appr. acreage
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Weymouth & Melcombe	1	24	1	10.5
Regis B				
Total	37	2,599	28	305.5

^a Including declaratory orders in respect of which a formal order had not yet been issued, but the minister had informed the local authority of the area to be designated

Source PRO file HLG 71/2222, "Declaratory Orders and ..."

centre had become unable to cope with modern traffic conditions, as the shape of most central areas was determined in the days before the motor vehicle had even been invented; finally, the third main reason was that it was necessary to provide a new environment for a changed way of living: conditions in post-war society were very different from those at the end of the last century. To these three main reasons, two more were to be added; first, the movement of functions out of bombed city centres during the war, and secondly, the fact that central areas had later increasingly attracted the attention of the private developer, as during mid-1950s the value of sites in central commercial areas had risen to a high level in relation to the value of the buildings they carried (Powdrill 1960, p. 247).

3.2 The Central Area Problems

Almost all British towns and cities which were of large size in 1939, had grown greatly between 1840 and 1914; during that period, the total built-up area increased substantially. Simultaneously, the central areas of these towns also increased in size, but not to a proportional extent (Ministry of Town and Country Planning (MTCP) 1947, p. 3).

By the beginning of the twentieth century, congestion in the streets had become a problem of major significance: it was traffic delays that imposed a serious economic cost on business in general (Ashworth 1965, p. 114). As a response, a Royal Commission inquired in 1905 into their extent at several points in London. The Commission concluded that improved transport in London was imperatively necessary, in the interests of public health and for the prompt transaction of business, as well as to make decent housing possible. It also declared that the narrowness of the streets was considered to be the main obstacle to improvement and that a comprehensive plan aiming to improve the road system should be prepared and continuously implemented as final considerations allowed (Royal Commission on London Traffic (RCLT) 1905, p. 8; Ashworth 1965, p. 114).

The traffic problem in the central areas of British towns became more serious after the First World War. In the Inter-War period, and especially between 1922 and 1939, the number of mechanically propelled vehicles increased from around 650,000 to 2,500,000. Moreover, the traffic approximately doubled between 1928 and 1938 (MTCP 1947, pp. 4–5). This rapid development, in conjunction with improvements in suburban rail services, had important consequences both for towns as a whole, and for towns' central areas.

As a response, another Commission was established to address the traffic problem; but it was unable in 1930 to find much evidence of improvement in traffic conditions in built-up areas (Royal Commission on Transport (RCT) 1930, pp. 60–61; Ashworth 1965, p. 115). This difficulty was summed up in the MTCP's view (1947, p. 5), that it did not exaggerate the importance of the traffic question to say that by 1939 the future of the central areas of larger towns depended on its solution.

Simultaneously, car parking provision in the central areas also became very early a basic problem in the solution of the traffic question. Already in the pre-war years, it had been suggested that underground car parks should be built, which additionally could be easily converted into shelters for the war needs (Astragal 1938, p. 672). However, the real problem generating the need for car parking provision in the post-war era was the lack of car parking places, mainly in the town centres. On this matter, Colin Buchanan¹ (1955, p. 48) in a paper given at the Public Works and Municipal Services Congress at Olympia on 19 November 1954, referring to the car parking question in central areas, and attempting to make a more systematic approach to the problem, distinguished three primary kinds of parking which were generated in any building: first, the disposal of vehicles operating from the building, secondly, the disposal of vehicles bringing visitors to the building, and lastly, the disposal of vehicles used for journeys to work by people employed in the building. To solve the problem, Buchanan (1955, p. 50) suggested a set of rules to determine the solution to two problems: first, what forms of parking, if any, could be subsidized out of public funds, and to what extent; secondly, one should secure that no serious inequity would arise between developers of new buildings who were obliged to provide parking space, and those who escaped this liability either because their sites were too small or awkwardly shaped or because they owned existing buildings where there was no possibility of providing parking space.

As the car parking problem was made up of a variety of individual problems, Glover (1959, pp. 269–272) suggested a range of solutions that spanned the possibilities from complete banning of the motor vehicle to absolute provision for it. In particular, he recommended measures for banning or discouraging the vehicle from entering the town centre, and for introducing parking regulations and providing off-street space for the vehicle. These solutions would be swamped by reality by the late 1950s, when the parking situation was out of control in many cities. By the 1960s, the State was being pressed to proceed towards a strategic car parking policy

¹ Colin Buchanan was Professor of Transport at Imperial College, University of London.

(Howgrave-Graham 1960, pp. 299–300; Roth 1961, pp. 287–289). These negative developments, however, lie outside the scope of this book. In the 1940s, car ownership projections were still based on the experience of the 1930s, as depressed by post-war restrictions on car production. In this perspective, the debate on parking in the 1940s was not unrealistic.

As Gordon Cherry and Leith Penny informed us (1986, p. 114), when the 1944 Act was passed, the Ministry's technical response took a relatively short time to evolve. Preliminary groundwork was done by a committee consisting of former planners and administrators from the Ministry of Health, chaired by GT Pound. But, it was KS Dodd, the Chief Regional Planning Officer, who raised the problem of central areas with George Pepler in March 1945. Pepler in turn contacted William Holford, having moved to University College from Liverpool at the end of the war (Anonymous 1953, p. 2), who himself had recently discussed the matter with the Legislation Division. Afterwards, the three men, Holford, Pepler and Dodd, met on 10 April 1945. In this meeting, it was agreed that the most urgent thing was not to formulate semi-legal clauses or amended model clauses, but quoting a passage from the PRO document, "Standards which would be intelligible to laymen and planning officers alike" (PRO file HLG 71/801, "Standards...").

Holford suggested that the first stage of such an intervention should be a purely advisory publication, which should take the form of an illustrated leaflet, not as detailed as a manual and dealing only with the more important aspects of the subject; amongst other matters, with shops, business premises, warehouses, public and service buildings, entertainment buildings, hotel and residential buildings, mixed uses and in part with industrial buildings.

Finally, it was decided that the Ministry of Town and Country Planning should be recommended to set up a new Committee on "Standards of Redevelopment in Central Areas with particular reference to those acquired by Local Authorities". The Committee would have as its objective to discuss problems of streets, heights (building volumes and forms), lighting, access and parking, open space, design, and external building appearance. In reality, it would not go into the detail required for such things as street furniture, lettering, fire prevention, etc., but it would naturally refer to reports or codes of practice which had already appeared, or were soon to appear, on these subjects. Gordon Stephenson was suggested to be the director of the work of this Committee (PRO file HLG 71/801, "Standards..."). It appears from a letter, written by KS Dodd to W Holford, that the above suggestion became acceptable, so Stephenson was appointed Chairman, while JA Stewart and Spence-Sales were the responsible persons representing the Plans Division of the Ministry (PRO file HLG 71/801, "Letter...").

All these aspects of the redevelopment of central areas, in conjunction with the accumulated problems in them, forced the State to introduce certain measures aiming towards the establishment of a framework regarding the technical and legislative rules. These measures had, to a degree, an innovating and pioneering character. Their analysis will be the object of Chap. 4.

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Chapter 4

Innovations in Planning Theory and Technique

Abstract The State introduction of certain measures aiming to the establishment of a framework regarding the technical and legislative rules is described. These measures had, to a degree, an innovating and pioneering character. The analysis of the main town planning ideas and the new planning techniques is the object of Chap. 4. Significant innovations in planning techniques were the introduction of the control of urban land uses, the control of building bulk, and the control of building daylighting. In the context of these proposals, the control of urban densities and the hygiene of residence and office accommodation in the city centres, must be considered of great importance in planning technique terms.

4.1 The Main Town Planning Ideas

The basic philosophy of planning for the post-war period, as expressed mainly by Patrick Abercrombie and Frederick Osborn, would not be dictated by market forces, but centrally by government controls. The intention of the planning system was clearly intended to control and guide both the pace and direction of change. The idealised system was to be centralised or unitary in character. It would be backed by impartial professionals withholding the common good (Hall et al. 1973, vol I, pp. 617–618 and vol II, p. 408).

In this theoretical context, the concept of *comprehensive*¹ development was significant in the planning debate after the war. The chief characteristic of this planning aspect was the subordination of the individual buildings to the requirements of the general development. The size of such an area attracted discussion.²

¹ *Comprehensive* in the sense that the visual, social and functional aspects would be united in a complete whole, which would make out of the total development something far greater than the sum of each separate aspect (Kaldeigh et al. 1954, p. 459). The idea of comprehensive urban planning for Britain's cities was developed by the reformers in the late 1840s and early 1850s (Hall et al. 1973, vol I, p. 99).

² According to King (1956, p. 15), a site of less than 5 acres could only be regarded as comprehensive since a multiplicity of uses and functions could hardly be performed on anything smaller, even in a small town.

In this respect, the smallest Comprehensive Development Area proposed in the Administrative County of London Plan extended to 30 acres. Nevertheless, the actual forms of redevelopment which might be undertaken in areas of this kind remained almost unknown. RH King (1956, pp. 13–14) concluded, that the broader ideas implicit in comprehensive redevelopment remained undiscussed and, generally speaking, such ideas that became known to planners largely originated from academic centres. They, to a great extent, owed their inspiration to the writings of Le Corbusier, who based his work solely on the “clean state” or “cleared area” principle.³

It may well be asked at this stage what happened to the “Street”, that is, to the town planning orthodoxy relating to the form of the city centres. Thomas Sharp,⁴ in contradiction to Le Corbusier, had accepted the axiom that the “Street” and the “Place” were the main urban units of design. In other words, architectural order required that buildings which were to be seen in association should be designed with due regard to each other, so that they might together make a coherent whole. The buildings which were seen together were those which stood in the same Street or Place. Therefore, the units of design were the Street and the Place respectively, or those parts of them which could be seen and appreciated at one time; as a consequence, the individual buildings which comprised the Street or the Place were merely considered components of that unit. This principle gave Sharp the opportunity to proceed on a number of suggestions regarding Street and Place design. The objectives of such a design were the avoidance of monotony, the achieving of coherence in the skyline, the harmony of the materials of which the buildings were constructed, the careful study of the vistas, the right proportion between building height and Street or Place width, and lastly, variety between different parts of the same town (PRO file HLG 71/779: 29–34, 39–40 and 44).

Anyway, the “corridor street” formed no part in the plans of Le Corbusier; an implementation of this thesis was the shopping centre of Coventry. However, the above theoretical principles, and particularly Le Corbusier’s idea of extensive clearance of an existing urban area and the rebuilding of it from the beginning, led to very expensive and unrealistic solutions for the economic part of the central area problem. This problem could be summarised in the following duality: the multiplicity of land ownership, and the high land values inherent in the *laissez-faire* system (King 1956, p. 14).

³ That is, in the idea of extensive clearance of an existing urban area and the rebuilding of it from the beginning.

⁴ Thomas Sharp became widely known as the advocate of “compact” planning and of a real urban character in town planning, in opposition to the low-density garden city tradition of planning. Sharp believed that it was easier to “endow” a town with fine spaces and fine ground patterns than with fine buildings. He based this idea on the fact that questions of aesthetics entered into actual building more than into ground planning and, moreover, on the fact that architects, builders and building owners had for one reason or another been unwilling to accept the same degree of discipline in the third dimension of building as had gradually been imposed on them in the two dimensions of site planning (PRO file HLG 71/779: 28).

In contrast to Sharp's aesthetic approach to the civic design question, other planners sought a method of controlling building volume, especially in the central areas, deriving their approach from a functional and sanitary point of view. This problem had its roots in the pre-Second World War building regulation system, but the matter started to be discussed again officially with the creation of the separate Ministry of Town and Country Planning.

But, these aspects should not be considered as the only inspiration; two primary images, on which several others were dependent, were "concentricity" and "segregation." Typically, the concentric model was reinforced by a road pattern in which *radial* roads converged on the centre, and this was reinforced again in the 1930s, when many large towns created outer ring roads. The concentric model lent itself to the idea that different planning treatment should be meted out to the different zones. Furthermore, within the concentric pattern areas a division between segregated functions was envisaged (Ravetz 1980, pp. 48–49). In general town planning terms, it created the conventional assumption that industry and housing must be separated; while, in the centre of towns, it was considered that out of 13 possible uses only four or five were permissible; these included shops, offices, wholesale, warehouses, educational, recreational and public buildings, and possibly light industry.

Regarding the traffic question, there was a general opinion in planning practice that the predominant type of urban road pattern in Britain was the radial system. The aspect that the radial pattern was the best solution was so strong that almost all official plans of large and medium-sized cities prepared after the Second World War followed this principle of planning (Smigielski 1955, p. 157). In accordance, the radial arteries leading to the town centre were regarded as terminating at an inner ring road; the principal function of the ring road was clearly to provide easier routes for traffic and also to take the through traffic out of the central area (Herbert 1963, p. 97).

On the same task, Sir Alker Tripp,⁵ the Assistant Commissioner of Police, Scotland Yard, supported the view (1951, p. 61) that at least one good circular road was required within the confines of the town itself to enable the town's own traffic to by-pass the centre as much as possible. He believed that by far the best plan would be to carry the ring road system. Therefore, it was a logical development that "ring roads" were very often recommended for implementation in many city plans, as for example, in those of Greater London, Manchester, and even of New Towns designed on virgin sites.

Other items, related to traffic problems were under consideration in the first post-war years; they included the segregation of traffic, and the need for provision of car parking in the central areas of towns. The segregation of the pedestrian and the vehicle in British towns had long been advocated by town planners; however, apart from a few New Towns in the USA (Radburn 1928, and the Greenbelt Towns

⁵ Tripp (1951) was widely respected. The generous compliments to the author in its foreword by Patrick Abercrombie, dated March 1942, confirmed the full incorporation of this career policeman into the town planning movement.

1933), this planning principle had been mainly restricted to shopping precincts; Rotterdam in Holland and Coventry in England were the first such post-war examples of town centre redevelopment; in both these cities, provision was made for two-level pedestrian access and circulation (King 1956, p. 15). On the same subject, Tripp (1951, pp. 65–81) argued that pedestrians ought to be able to travel fast even in towns, because otherwise the value of the speedy motor vehicle was neutralised. This is why, he was opposed very often to the architects and planning authorities who, for practical reasons, were often inclined to shy away when separation of carriageway levels was demanded for certain cases.

Additionally, the growth of motor traffic was also an important and influencing factor in the formation of town planning ideas. As Ravetz argued (1980, p. 50), it ultimately drove it “towards more rigid, geometrical designs.” To this end, the contribution of Tripp was great. Of particular importance were, first, his proposal that a hierarchy of roads was needed; a hierarchy, which was equivalent to the principle that each kind of road was allowed to make a junction only with its own type or the type immediately adjacent to it. Second, his invention of the *precinct*; this emerged from the classified road system, in that a number of “pockets” would be created, known as *precincts*; each of these consisted of a little local system of minor roads, devoted to industrial, business, shopping or residential purposes (Tripp 1951, pp. 75–79). Both of these ideas of Tripp had a major contribution to the evolution of British urban traffic planning from the early 1940s, and they were incorporated to a greater or a lesser degree into the post-war reconstruction plans especially for central areas.

A response to this crucial planning dilemma was essayed by Sir William G Holford⁶ in his writings and town plans. In a paper at a general meeting of the Town Planning Institute (TPI) on 8 February 1949, Holford introduced the question of combining both the “clean state” principle of Le Corbusier, which was considered as the radical solution, and that of Tripp’s idea of the “precinct”, which had a more conservative character. He supported the aspect that a combination of both of these devices was a way to bring the arisen problem “down to earth” (Holford 1949, pp. 73, 77).

But, apart from Holford’s suggestion, what were the main trends relating to the technical solution of the basic problems of the central area redevelopment question? An answer to this will be undertaken through the presentation of the aspects dominating the town planning circles, concerning the manner of intervention generally in a central area in those years.

⁶ Sir William G. Holford was Professor of Town Planning at the University of London and later President of the Town Planning Institute (period 1953–1954) (Anonymous 1953, p. 2).

4.2 The New Town Planning Techniques

The first application of the ideas in planning technique was introduced in the case of reconstruction of the City of London. Actually, these were contained in the Final Report of the City of London, which was presented in April 1947 by the joint planning consultants, Dr. CH Holden and Professor WG Holford, to the Improvements and Town Planning Committee (Anonymous 1947, p. 425). In this Report, among the other suggestions, there were two important ones in town planning practice terms; the first was that the distribution of floor space throughout the City of London had to be checked by a kind of density-control; it led to the adoption of the “Standard Plot Ratio”. The second referred to the need to secure the lighting of the interior of buildings; it led to the introduction of the “Daylighting Code” (Marmaras 1992, pp. 270–277).

The outcome of the above Committee took the form of a handbook on *The Redevelopment of Central Areas*, issued in the summer of 1947 and circulated in January 1948 (Swarbrick 1949). According to it, it was intended primarily for Local Authority Planning Officers and Consultants and secondly for the members of Planning Committees and others interested in planning (MTCP 1947, Foreword). Three important and related codes in town planning technique were formulated by it: the first concerned the “land uses” of the central areas, the second, the “control” of building bulk, and the third, the “daylighting” of buildings.

4.2.1 The Control of Urban Land Uses

An important question faced by the British towns was that of land use in their central areas. The debate among the town planners had been mainly focused on the following tasks: the facing of the problems created by the retail trade shops, and of those due to the increase of office demand. Although these did not have an immediate relationship with the wartime destruction, but with the dynamics of post-war economic growth, the above dual question was discussed at an interdepartmental level, in that it had to be faced as an urgent problem for the revival of the blitzed cores of the cities in the form of “commercial buildings” (PRO file HLG 71/2222, “Cabinet: ...”, 1948). In particular and relating to the problem of the retail trade shops, new ideas began to appear for the design of the “shopping centre”. These ideas were based on the principle of the comprehensive planning for the whole area. Very influential here was the pedestrian shopping centre, known as the *Lijnbaan* at Rotterdam, which was frequently used to persuade local councils and shopkeepers to adopt an arrangement of shops, which involved the segregation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. This pattern had as an additional feature a unity of design, which, according to its advocates, had been achieved through coordination and co-operation between the architects and the interior decorators, as well as the municipal authorities (Broek and Bakema 1956, pp. 21, 22 and 25). In these new

centres, most shop buildings were limited to one or two, or, at most, three floors in height. Meanwhile, the basic shapes of the open spaces were two, the square or court, and the promenade. The latter type was lined with shops, possibly leading to a car park, and was often popular with shoppers, who appreciated the greater feeling of bustle and movement in the more enclosed, intimate space, and with traders, who liked the public to pass close to their window (Wilson 1958, p. 196). To sum up, the segregation of pedestrians from traffic became a basic aim of the civic design of the above schemes. The pioneer examples of the Lijnbaan and that of redevelopment at Coventry were partial segregation schemes or precincts in the shopping and commercial centres.⁷

Finally, as J Seymour Harris supported (1961, pp. 246–50), the fundamental principles to be taken into account in the design procedure of a shopping centre were accepted in 1960, as follows:

- (a) Elimination of all vehicular traffic from all pedestrian zones.
- (b) Continuity of shopping frontages.
- (c) Protection of the customer from inclement weather.
- (d) Provision of adequate car parking facilities.
- (e) Segregation of service vehicles.
- (f) Use of levels.
- (g) Use of upper floors.
- (h) Maximum freedom for shop fitters compatible with good design.
- (i) Incorporation of amenities for the general public.

The problem of office location in the town centres became also a burning question after 1954 (Taylor 1966, p. 55; Marriott 1967, p. 1). It is this phenomenon which was investigated by Oliver Marriott in his book *The Property Boom*. Before 1954, the statutory planning framework established by the 1944 Act and the 1947 Act did not give any opportunity to the private developer to tackle redevelopment on a large scale (TPI 1960, p. 155). The state of office building in England and Wales as at 1962 was that in the 94 planning authority areas about 110,000,000 sq. ft. of office space had been approved in post-war years, and that in the remaining authorities an estimated further 10,000,000 sq. ft. had been approved.

Much of this building had taken place after 1954, when the post-war restrictions on office building were removed. Then, in 1963, the Government put forward a policy to make planning control over new office building more effective and to discourage businesses from setting up or expanding in Central London in particular (Taylor 1966, pp. 54, 55). Actually, the growing seriousness of London's congestion was generally acknowledged; Joan V. Aucott pointed out (1960, p. 39) that, between 1948 and 1958 the LCC approved plans for the creation of 44,400,000 sq. ft. of office space in new buildings, replacements, extensions and

⁷ The town centre of the New Town of Stevenage, although it was not a war-damaged case, is considered as a characteristic attempt which introduced one hundred per cent segregation between pedestrians and vehicles' traffic (Vincent 1960, p. 103).

changes of use in the central area. The peak year was 1954–1955, when building restrictions were eased. Since then, the annual rate of approvals had fallen from 6,700,000 sq. ft. to about 2,700,000 sq. ft.

This situation created the need for many firms to move out of the central area of London, mainly for two reasons: first, the office accommodation which was offered in central areas was reduced due to the expansion of the firms, while the central area remained unchanged in size; second, they were unwilling to pay central area costs and special inducement rates for routine workers whose space needs, with their office machines, were comparatively high (Aucott 1960, p. 44).

The idea that the various main uses of urban land should be segregated into functional zones within a plan has its roots in the planning ideas of the early twentieth century. It was later expressed in the Athens Charter at the fourth CIAM of 1933 (Esher 1981, p. 37). Subsequently, this principle was adopted by many town planners and officials. For example, it emerges from: Gillies B, “Central Commercial Zones, 29.12.1949” (PRO file HLG 71/218), that: “a central commercial zone will only be defined where it is useful”. In Britain, influences of this principle could be recognised in the advisory handbook published by the Ministry of Town and Country Planning under the title *The Redevelopment of Central Areas*, which has already been mentioned.

The handbook recommended that any plan for the redevelopment of a central area should be composed of some defined classes of buildings and, also, should be divided into a number of *use zones*. As a consequence, the building uses proposed for any central area of a large town should contain: shops, offices, wholesale warehouses, public buildings, and places of assembly, as well as possibly some light industrial buildings; at the same time, dwelling houses were to be excluded from these areas, as well as other residential buildings, for example hotels, that were considered unsuitable for them (MTCP 1947, pp. 26–27). According to the handbook’s suggestions, the following four use zones were suitable for the areas, selected from a total number of eight, which were considered to cover all the main land uses contained in a town area.⁸ These were shopping, office, wholesale, and lastly, educational, recreational, and public buildings.

Two further recommendations of the handbook are also significant in this context. The first referred to the planned layout of shopping zones, which together with car parks siting and routing of public service vehicles, was expected to encourage the redevelopment of the central areas. The second referred to the separation of offices from shopping; in this regard, it was recommended that, since the siting and layout conditions most suitable for shops differed from those most suitable for offices, the bulk of accommodation needed for each of these two uses, should be provided in separate zones (MTCP 1947, pp. 27–28).

⁸ The list of the recommended total use zones for every town were the following: zone 1: residential, zone 2: business (shop), zone 3: business (office), zone 4: business (wholesale warehouses), zone 5: educational, recreational and public buildings zone, zone 6: light industrial zone, zone 7: industrial zone, zone 8: special industrial zone. For more details, see: (MTCP 1947, p. 26).

To sum up, it becomes obvious that central urban area planning was dominated by the concept of “zoning”, and that this was intended to override “free market” or *laissez-faire* processes, according to which the distribution of space between the various functions in a central area was best determined by the business firms located in the same area.

4.2.2 *The Control of Building Bulk*

The most significant innovation introduced by the handbook on *The Redevelopment of Central Areas* was probably that referring to the floor space control applied to non-residential building uses other than schools and residential colleges, public buildings and places of assembly. Under pre-war planning schemes there were already for all buildings, including residential, three controls referring to site coverage, maximum height and external appearance. Simultaneously, dwelling houses and flats were subject to density control as well. The permitted site coverage to be occupied by the three main classes of buildings might vary according to whether the zone was at the centre or outskirts of the town and according to the proposed height of the building (PRO file HLG 71/1300: “Floor Space...”: 1–2).

Regarding the limitation of heights of buildings, no class of building was permitted to exceed a certain maximum height, which might vary according to the class of building or location in the town, or a height limited by an angle of elevation from the centre of the street. Finally, the external appearance was used to control building bulk only in special places of architectural importance. The disadvantages of the above system of control were considered to be: first, that no simple estimation was possible of the amount of building accommodation permitted in a particular zone or zones, and secondly that the restriction imposed on the form of development was unnecessarily rigid; while the objective of limiting volume and ensuring good daylight conditions could be achieved by a more flexible control, without imposing a particular building envelope or maximum height on the plot. At the same time, pre-war control was designed for the “negative” planning of all the area covered by a Resolution or Scheme. The post-war system introduced controls had been designed primarily for defined areas of comprehensive development, which included redevelopment. This would need to be adapted for control of isolated development in an area not being comprehensively developed and for which detailed proposals had not been prepared (PRO file HLG 71/1300: “Floor Space...”: 1–2). What then were the main characteristics of the new means of control of building bulk?

The idea of the *floor space index* (FSI) was introduced to control the density of building distribution particularly in the central areas. This was a ratio between the total area of the floors contained within a building or buildings and the area of plot or other land area on which it stood, including half the width of adjoining public streets. The area of floors was the sum of the roofed areas at each floor level, including wall thickness, corridors, staircases and basements. According to the

handbook, the Floor Space Index was considered to offer the simplest means of determining, comparing and controlling the building accommodation contained or to be provided within land areas of any size (MTCP 1947, p. 20).

By introducing the FSI into planning practice, it was considered that the following aims could be achieved (MTCP 1947, p. 36):

- (i) The provision of a street system adequate for the traffic that might be expected within each part of a central area.
- (ii) The regrouping of buildings within reasonably large and regularly shaped street blocks.
- (iii) The provision of good conditions for each building, including a high standard of daylighting, ventilation, access for goods vehicles, etc.
- (iv) A reasonable compactness of building development within each street block—that is, the area which is bounded on all sides by streets having carriageways but is not subdivided by any such street, zone and the central area as a whole.

In addition to the above improvements in the technique of planning, the FSI was considered as an immediate positive measure in the case of the preparation of redevelopment plans for the central areas. The chosen FSI was to be based on the existing building densities of 1939 and the main aim was to reduce the great differences in density of development that existed before the war between the various parts of central areas (PRO file HLG 71/34, “Draft notes...”). At the time of the *handbook*’s issue, the Ministry of Town and Country Planning had not yet been able to make a full examination of the FSI of existing central areas, but the available information indicated that in provincial towns of about 250,000 population the FSI of individual street blocks ranged from about 4.5 down to 0.5 and that the average FSI for all street blocks did not much exceed 1.5 (MTCP 1947, p. 36). Nevertheless, it was recommended that if differences were thought necessary between the FSI of zones, it would probably prove desirable for the lowest index to apply to the shopping zone, the next lowest to the office zone and the highest to the wholesale warehouses and light industrial zones.⁹ It is apparent from the above regulations that through the defining of FSI per use zone and per town, the Ministry was trying to reduce speculation in the urban land of the central areas and, at the same time, to formulate a desirable built environment in those districts.

Furthermore, it was suggested subsequent to the publication of the *handbook* that, while the FSI was a suitable instrument for broad control of the floor space to

⁹ The range of variation might be of the following order in a town where the overall FSI had been fixed at 1.5; in shopping zones: 1.5, in office zones: 2.0, in wholesale warehouses zones: 2.0–2.5, while in educational, recreational and public buildings zones it was suggested that as in some towns the relevant zones might contain a relatively greater amount of open zones, for this reason the FSI was not considered as the suitable instrument for controlling the detailed distribution of building accommodation in this zone (MTCP 1947, pp. 38–39).

be provided for each building block, another ratio should be invented which would be more suitable for allocating the total floor space of the block between different plots (MTCP 1947, p. 4). This was needed because, in cases where a block was redeveloped as a whole that is not divided into plots, the FSI was adequate as it gave the aggregate floor space allowed and complete freedom in its distribution within the block. However, in cases where only part of a block could be redeveloped, or where the block was subdivided into plots for different developers, there were considerations which the block FSI might not satisfy. In this situation, the principle that the width of streets surrounding a block should be included in the amount of floor space permitted, was already acknowledged in the block FSI irrespective of the method of redevelopment; if, however, the block FSI was applied to plots individually two possibilities should be taken into account: first, the advantage in floor space lay with plots having maximum frontage, irrespective of depth, and second, building volume would not be evenly distributed, but would be “weighted” at each external corner and the central part of a block would be “light” or short of floor space in relation to plot area (PRO file HLG 71/1300, “The Application of...”: 3).

As a consequence, it started to be considered that there was no reason why the extent of frontage should be the controlling factor, as, for example, the relation between frontage and traffic generation varied considerably within a zone. Corner plots enjoyed certain advantages in location over intermediate plots and it was advisable not to increase this advantage by automatically permitting additional floor space, although the FSI for corner and intermediate plots should be made as attractive to developers as corner plots. As a result, it was suggested in 1948 that as long as reasonable access was assured to all plots within any block, the total floor space should be distributed according to the plot size and not the site area that is plots and half adjoining streets. The total floor space within a block as a whole would, of course, have been fixed by the FSI. This plot distribution of floor space within the block FSI was called the *plot ratio* method. As plot ratio was defined the ratio between total area of floors and the area of plot without including half the width of adjoining public streets, according to the following formula:

$$\text{Plot ratio} = \text{FSI} \times \frac{\text{Site area}}{\text{Plot area}}$$

There were planning arguments for and against this use of plot ratio. However, from the developer's point of view the plot ratio was more acceptable as an instrument of control in that it was based clearly on the actual area of plot without reference to areas of adjoining streets or open spaces (PRO file HLG 71/1300, “Floor Space...”: 3–4). Furthermore, this method encouraged developers to build in areas of comprehensive redevelopment rather than to be involved in small plots building.

4.2.3 The Control of Building Daylighting

The need to control building daylighting derived from the fact that the amount of daylight available in a typical town centre was not naturally limited, but was reduced by local atmospheric pollution, and by the many building obstructions. As a result, the total amount available within buildings was often rather less than the ideal amount required for working purposes. The first official indication of a method to be implemented in developing building sites, in such a way that the illumination would be secured, appeared in the already mentioned handbook: *The Redevelopment of Central Areas*.

Before the above publication, the owner of a site might erect a building of considerable height, if the covenants of the deed of grant and the building bye-laws permitted, either contiguous or in close proximity to the boundary of a neighbour's vacant land and with windows overlooking it. This was considered as a risky procedure, as the neighbour might erect a similar structure on his own land, the same distance from the boundary, and so restrict the amount of daylight that would otherwise have reached the building previously erected on the adjoining site. So long as the original building had not enjoyed the daylight reaching its windows for over 19 years, no legal action could be taken to restrain the neighbour successfully and no compensation would be granted to the original building owner in respect of loss of light. The penalty of erecting a building close to an existing one, in this way, was the creation of deficiency in the access of daylight to both structures. It therefore frequently happened that the neighbour took care to keep the new erection on this land further from the boundary than the original building, so as to avoid undue loss of daylight. In such a case, the owner who built first secured an advantage in the use that could be made of his site. This was obviously an unfair use of land (Swarbrick 1949).

The above situation was tackled by the advisory handbook in its Appendix 3 under the title: "The Daylighting of Buildings." It provided a standard by which the measuring of daylight in office buildings could be controlled. The office buildings were taken as typical of those in central areas within which good daylighting was of great importance for their function. Especially, the daylight indoors was measured as a percentage of the total light available outdoors under an unobstructed sky and the percentage of daylight was called the *daylight factor* (DF). As a consequence, a DF of 1% meant that at the point of measurement the illumination was 1% of that which could have been obtained if from that point the whole hemisphere of the sky could have been seen. The standard recommended for offices was a DF of 1% at a distance of 12 feet from the external wall and at a height of 2 feet 9 inches above the floor. The objective of this idea was to develop a system of daylighting control which would provide this standard within all buildings that contained a normal number of windows of reasonable dimensions, and it was recommended that this standard should be applied in all zones of a central urban area. This method of controlling the daylighting or overshadowing of buildings was likely to promote the more efficient and convenient layout of buildings and, from this point of view, the

method could be applied more easily to land acquired by Planning Authorities with a view to redevelopment (MTCP 1947, pp. 43–44 and 98–99). In the ensuing criticism of this method of daylight buildings control the contributions of John Swarbrick and of A Murrey Graham were of particular interest.

John Swarbrick published his views in *The Builder* on 21 October 1949, under the title: “Planning for Daylight: A new method of developing building sites”. Additionally, he tried through a memorandum submitted to the Minister Lewis Silkin to influence Government policy. Swarbrick recommended that a uniform angle should be set from the centre of a street and land boundaries and that anyone who wished to build beyond this line should advise the Minister as to what should be allowed. This proposal was considered as crude by the officials of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning (PRO file HLG 71/790).

Murray (1955, pp. 41–42) argued that experience had shown that the introduced method of daylight control had only limited application in everyday planning problems and could rarely be applied successfully to the smaller, piecemeal redevelopment projects that formed an increasingly large proportion of central urban planning applications by that year. Furthermore, he argued that because daylight control was based on one standard size of window and one standard of illumination and penetration for a given class of building use, it could not operate successfully in mixed areas containing buildings of varying age and form, and varying internal arrangements. As a response to the above disadvantages, Murray tried to devise a method of measurement that would obviate conversion of linear dimensions into angles and, at the same time, would retain the versatility of the diagram introduced by the official handbook. This device eliminated measurement and conversion, plotting, drawing and planimeter work and substituted direct reading and summation of unit sky-factor values. The above Murray Graham’s proposals were submitted to the Chief Architect and Planning Officer, in the Department of Health for Scotland. The Department was actively interested in Daylight Control but had not formally adopted the methods described above, when they had been published in the *Journal of the Town and Planning Institute*, that is in January 1955.

Concluding this task, we can summarise that the implementation stage of the re-planning of British cities after the Second World War destruction contained, as we saw, suggestions for the rebuilding of the urban areas, especially the central ones. Among them, the proposals for the City of London, prepared by Holden and Holford, were of particular value. This is, mainly, because they left the level of general and theoretical proposals and formulated specific solutions for the inner city problems. In the context of these proposals, the introduced innovations concerning the control of urban densities and the hygiene of residence and office accommodation in the city centres, must be considered of great importance in planning technique terms.

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Part II
The Preparation of Planning Machinery

Chapter 5

The Urban Reconstruction Machinery Issue

Abstract This chapter focuses on the 1940–1944 period, and deals with the administrative developments related to the formulation of the reconstruction machinery and its effects in establishing the central planning authority. Emphasis is given on the Barlow, Scott and Uthwatt Reports which recommended the decentralisation or dispersal of both the industry and the industrial population, and the control of urban and agricultural land. The issue of the establishment of a central planning authority was one of the most important contained in the Barlow Commission’s report. As an outcome, the new Ministry of Town and Country Planning was established, gathering to itself all central town planning powers, responsibility for legislation and the civil servants previously concerned with planning.

The need for the re-organisation of Britain in economic and physical terms was apparent many years before the outbreak of the Second World War. In that period and for many years later, the dominant aspect was that change in the physical environment would solve social problems. Peter Hall supported that (1985, p. 84): “the need for national/regional planning only became fully evident in the aftermath of the Great Depression of 1929–1932”. However, the great opportunity was absent from the British scene. We could support that in practical terms, a systematic consideration of post-war issues first began under the War Aims Committee of the Cabinet, which was set up on 23 August 1940. The Committee had as a primary object to produce a statement on war aims which could be used publicly as counter-propaganda to the Nazi New Order in Europe (Cullingworth 1975, pp. 3–4). The necessary strong impetus was given by the undesirable fact of the bombing of many British cities and towns from the autumn of 1940 (Ashworth 1965, p. 227).

To some extent, this evolution is reflected in the voluminous work of the Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population (RCDIP 1940), which sat under the chairmanship of Sir Montague Barlow from July 1937 to January 1940¹ (Richardson 1972, p. 68). The main recommendations of the Commission were threefold: first, a Central Planning Authority “national in scope and character”

¹ More than 2 years before the actual outbreak of the war between Britain and Germany on 3 September 1939; that is, some months later than the first air raids on naval targets in the Firth of Forth, Orkney and Shetland in October and November 1939 (Baker 1978, p. 13).

(RCDIP 1940, p. 201) should be created; secondly, congested urban areas should be redeveloped, and industries and industrial population should be dispersed from them; and lastly, a reasonable balance of industrial development should be encouraged throughout the regions of the country. Additionally, and particularly, the continued drift of the industrial population to London and the Home Counties was held to constitute “a social, economic and strategical problem which demands immediate attention” (RCDIP 1940, p. 202).

The publication of the Barlow Commission’s report prompted an extensive debate on urban reconstruction during the wartime years. It had as a final result the establishment of new planning machinery, although the Commission itself merely made a general suggestion in this respect. For the above reasons, this report has often been regarded by historians as heralding the new, post-1945 approach to urban and regional planning. Cherry (1974, p. 121) states that “the importance of the report has been that many of its policy recommendations were accepted by all post-war governments, up to the present time”. The aim of this chapter will be the examination of this public debate, stimulated by the circulation of the Barlow Commission’s report, and especially its contribution to the formulation of ideas concerning the questions of the central planning authority, the distribution of the industrial population, and the related subject of the control of urban land.

The objectives of post-Second World War British reconstructive activity were very wide. They contained the organisation of external affairs, such as commercial relations with other countries, war compensation from enemy countries and the negotiation of loans, mainly from the United States of America. Even more, they included the management of internal problems, such as employment, education, social security and public works. It is necessary here to distinguish, among the latter problems, between the non-physical and the physical aspects of reconstruction. The non-physical aspects included labour and employment, health and social security, education and to some extent, food supply and distribution; the physical aspects included all works and buildings, as well as town and country planning in its widest sense (Wright 1982, p. 199).

In the following, we shall be concerned with those internal, primarily physical, aspects of reconstruction which are most clearly expressed by the term *urban reconstruction*. This term had lost its initial wide meaning very soon, and in the vocabulary of the wartime period it was used with regard to the rebuilding of specific sites in bombed areas. The narrowing of the term led Lord John Reith,² the Minister of Works and Buildings, to declare in a press conference on 8 August 1941, “I wish we could call it “planning” and not “reconstruction”, because that is a word that is being used with regard to the League of Nations, and all sorts of things, and it is used in a limited sense” (PRO file HLG 71/1254: Minutes of proceedings).

² Lord Reith had been appointed Minister for Works and Buildings in September 1940. In December 1940, he submitted a memorandum to the War Cabinet about the inadequacies of the pre-war planning system together with a proposal for the basic objectives and principles of post-war planning machinery (Essex and Brayshay 2007, p. 422).

Returning to the debate caused by the recommendations of the Barlow Commission's report, the multiplying contributions to the planning literature, and the involvement of various political parties, organisations and other lobbies produced a lively and complex discussion. Furthermore, the political parties produced a number of pamphlets, as well as the various propaganda and technical associations, such as the Association for Planning and Regional Reconstruction, and The Town and Country Planning Association. Simultaneously, large numbers of individuals participated, through public expression of their ideas in the pages of scientific journals, newspapers, radio programmes and films.

5.1 The Central Planning Authority: The Case and the Debate

The issue of the establishment of a central planning authority was one of the most important contained in the Barlow Commission's report. The Commission, in order to face the problems created mainly by the industrial relocation, recommended as necessary the planned control of it. An indication comes from the following Barlow report's quotation (RCDIP 1940, p. 201):

[...] The problems of location of industry are national in character—they touch and indeed tend to overlap those of agriculture, land, water, transport, roads, amenities and many of the major activities of the national life. The solution of the problems of location, therefore, must be sought along the lines of national inquiry and national guidance. So far as any inquiry or guidance by Government is available at present, it is departmental and not national in character [...]

However, an essential divergence emerged among the members of the Commission concerning the nature of the central authority. This was the reason why, finally, two reports were submitted on this crucial issue. According to the majority opinion, a national authority should be established, taking the form of a Board comprising a Chairman and three other Members chosen by reason of their eminence in public life, regard being had to their experience in industry and business from the side of both employers and employed. The Board to be called the “National Industrial Board” (RCDIP 1940, pp. 204–205):

The minority view, expressed by three members of the Commission including Patrick Abercrombie, Professor of Town Planning at University College, London, and the leading British authority on town and country planning of his day. Their suggestion was a new Ministry “to be fitted into the scheme of central and local government, if it is to function properly”, and “take over the town planning functions now vested in the Ministry of Health”, “some part of the planning functions of the Ministry of Transport”, and “possibly some parts of the housing functions of the Ministry of Health” (RCDIP 1940, p. 222). The explanation of this divergence between the two groups of Commissioners is to be sought especially in the fact that the executive powers for the suggested National Industrial Board were considered by

the minority group as inadequate. The general objective, however, was agreed by all members of the Commission.

In 1942, Arthur Greenwood, the Minister of Reconstruction, put before the House of Commons a third possibility for the foundation of a central authority. He proposed that it ought not to reside in a single Department. There should be a National Development Board presided over by a Minister free from departmental responsibilities and composed of the Ministers whose Departments are concerned with various aspects of national development (Anonymous 1942e, p. 380).

This third proposal could be considered as a synthesis of the previous suggestions by the Barlow Commission's report. Actually, it combined the characteristics of a Board, chaired though by a Minister. Furthermore, some planning writers supported similar proposals for the form of the central planning authority. In 1940, Thomas Sharp, the distinguished town-planner, in antithesis to the low-density garden-city type of planning, wrote that the planning activity should be in charge of a Minister directly responsible to Parliament. This Minister and his Department should take over all the land-planning functions, which were scattered among other Ministries, and other governmental departments (Sharp 1944, pp. 147–148).

Soon after, in 1941, the Bournville Village Trust (1941, p. 121), which intended to promote the provision of “improved dwellings, with gardens and open spaces to be enjoyed therewith”, for the “working-class and laboring population in and around Birmingham and elsewhere in Great Britain” (Bournville Village Trust 1900), referring to the rebuilding of Birmingham, argued that the creation of a national planning authority, on the lines of the Barlow Commission's recommendations, was needed. The Trust considered that under the aegis of this authority local planning could be carried out without restriction by existing administrative boundaries.

Also in 1941, Osborn (1941, p. 14), who had with some persistence advocated the policy of dispersal, green belts and new towns by writings, lectures, broadcasts, “lobbying”, evidence to Government committees, etc. (Anonymous 1956, p. 209), supported that there might be a Ministry of State primarily concerned with securing the best use of the land in the national interests. This ministry should take over the central administration of statutory planning, housing and (on the construction side) of highways. It should also have stronger powers to prescribe planning standards in all schemes; new powers to guide the location of industry by localised restrictions and inducements; increased powers to promote the building of satellite towns and trading estates and the rebuilding of town centres.

A more sophisticated suggestion was submitted by Fogarty (1944, p. 29). He recommended the creation of an Inter-Ministerial Committee, which would be composed of all the senior Ministers concerned with the forms of development covered by planning. The Committee would be presided over by a Minister for National Development. The business of both would be to take a general view over the whole field of planning, to settle the main lines of advance and to decide differences of opinion between the various executive departments.

The machinery suggested by Fogarty (1944, pp. 31–32) for the regional level was more complicated. The body responsible for actually making regional plans

would be the directly or indirectly elected regional planning authority. This authority would work under the supervision of the central Departments concerned with different aspects of policy. As a consequence, the national plan would be drawn in a very broad outline, while the regional directions would set detailed recommendations for a particular area. The detailed work, such as the zoning of land for industry and housing, decisions about the layout of minor roads, or the action to be taken locally about health services or industrial development, would be left to the local planning authorities.

5.2 The Distribution of the Industrial Population: The Case and the Debate

The Barlow Commission also recommended the decentralisation or dispersal of both the industry and the industrial population. Garside (1997, p. 20) supports that the industrial location in wartime discussions was regarded by some as “the bed-rock” of planning. The Commission argued that the best method of achieving dispersal should be studied by their proposed central authority (RCDIP 1940, p. 198). However, very soon the question was raised of what would happen to agriculture, the countryside and rural life in general, should these recommendations be adopted as an official policy (Anonymous 1942b, p. 119). The question had been debated between an idealistic, socialist-oriented group, the Town and Country Planning Association and the most conservative Council for the Preservation of Rural England. Abercrombie’s significant contribution was the resolving of the antithesis, succeeding to convince them in adopting the concept of the Green Belt (Hall et al. 1973, vol II, pp. 55–56).

Partly in response to the above question, the Government set up the Committee on Land Utilisation in Rural Areas (CLURA) under the chairmanship of Lord Justice Scott³ in October 1941. The Scott Committee had as terms of reference to consider the conditions which should govern building and other constructional development in country areas consistently with the maintenance of agriculture. In particular, the factors affecting the location of industry, having regard to economic operation, part-time and seasonal employment, the well-being of rural amenities and the preservation of rural amenities (CLURA 1942, ii).

The Scott Committee’s report presented in August 1942 distinguished seven broad categories, recognising at the same time that there were no hard and fast lines between these categories (CLURA 1942, p. 61). These categories were:

³ Lord Justice Scott was chairman of the Acquisition of Land Committee, 1917–1919, whose reports led to the Acquisition of Land (Compensation) Act, and the Agricultural Organisation Society, 1917–1922, whilst he was also a member of the Executive Committee of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England (Anonymous 1942a, p. 98).

- (i) Extractive Industries and certain industries based thereon.
- (ii) Immobile or Rooted Industries.
- (iii) Linked Industries.
- (iv) Mobile Industries.
- (v) Public Utility Undertakings.
- (vi) Rural Trades and Crafts.
- (vii) Trades providing the conveniences of life

Furthermore, the Committee recommended that industry should be encouraged first to make use of vacant or derelict sites in towns and that where industries were brought into country areas they should be located in existing or new small towns and not in villages or the open country.

In addition to the industrial location question, the Scott Committee returned to the subject of the needed machinery and procedure for planning and development. It noted the essential distinction between the formation of a national plan and its execution. Indeed, it visualised the governmental machinery as consisting of the following parts (CLURA 1942, p. 70 and 80):

- (i) A standing Committee of the Ministers concerned, under the chairmanship of a non-departmental Minister of Cabinet rank.
- (ii) Government Departments concerned with development
- (iii) A Central Planning Commission.
- (iv) Such ad hoc bodies as might be needed to carry out functions not already covered by existing Ministries or other authorities or bodies.

For the success of national planning, the Scott Committee considered that it was essential to maintain local initiative and enterprise and that, subject to the general guidance to be afforded by the directions of the Commission by which national policy will be interpreted, local authorities will continue to exercise their functions as planning authorities (CLURA 1942, p. 82).

The criticism which developed after the above suggestion was related to the difficulty of establishing such a scheme of national planning. Adopting the words of the commentator, "Astragal" of *A'J* (1942b, p. 407), we could summarise here that to set up a body which can satisfactorily, continuously and with reasonable speed, combine the reconstruction schemes of various ministries into a workable national plan, such a body must be empowered, at times, to secure the modification or rejection of part of the proposals of one or another Ministry.

5.3 The Control of Urban Land: The Case and the Debate

As far as the control of the land question, the considerations of the Barlow Commission were based on the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1932, under which in certain conditions: (i) A person whose property is injuriously affected by the operation of a planning scheme may claim compensation from the

planning authority and (ii) The planning authority may claim betterment from a person whose property is increased in value by the operation of a planning scheme (RCDIP 1940, p. 116).

It also pointed out that there were the following three difficulties in equating compensation with betterment under the existing system (RCDIP 1940, p. 117):

(i) If the potential development value of each piece of land is assessed separately, the total sum arrived at is likely to be greatly in excess of the sum which could fairly be claimed if the prospective development of the country as a whole is considered;

(ii) The difficulty of providing betterment, and especially, of providing that betterment in any individual case results from a particular planning scheme, makes any betterment provisions largely ineffective;

(iii) It is not practicable to levy betterment unless and until the landowner has the betterment actually in hand, i.e. on the disposal of his land.

The need for a further investigation of the “compensation and betterment” question and its consequences for the issue of land control were evident to the War Cabinet. In January 1941, as one consequence of this perception, the Expert Committee on Compensation and Betterment was set up under the chairmanship of Mr Justice Uthwatt.⁴ The Uthwatt Committee had as terms of reference to make an objective analysis of the subject of the payment of compensation and recovery of betterment, in respect of public control of the use of land (Young 1943, p. 86).

In July 1941, an Interim Report was presented by the Uthwatt Committee in which two particularly important recommendations for planning were included: first, interim control of development should be extended throughout the country in order to prevent work being done which might prejudice reconstruction; secondly, special reconstruction areas should be defined so that they might be re-planned as a whole. The submission of the Final Report followed in September 1942 and gave the Committee’s contribution to the “compensation and betterment” question.

The Uthwatt Committee used two assumptions as a basis for its work. The first one was that national planning was intended to be a reality and a permanent feature of the administration of the internal affairs of the country. The second assumption derived from the first one as, while the principle of national planning had already been accepted by the Government, much remained to be done to carry it into effect, and the precise shape of the future planning policy and the degree of centralisation were as yet undermined (Anonymous 1942d, p. 168). In this context, the Uthwatt Committee assumed that, in order for the reconstruction procedure to be effective, a central planning authority was needed. But this did not yet exist, while national planning had a meaning not attached to it in any legislation nor in the minds of the public.

⁴ Uthwatt was experienced in dealing with knotty problems connected with angles of light, rights of way and the like. He also practiced privately at that time and his services were in great demand, as his ability to understand the law on Taxation was unsurpassed (Anonymous 1942c, p. 162).

On the problem of “compensation and betterment”, the main conclusions the Uthwatt Committee had drawn may be summarised as follows (Anonymous 1942d, p. 169):

- (i) The existing statutory provisions, which had not proved satisfactory in the sphere of local planning, would be altogether inadequate for application to the circumstances created by planning conceived as a national operation.
- (ii) The existence of the “compensation and betterment” problem could be traced to three root causes: (a) the fact that land in private ownership was a marketable commodity; (b) the fact that land was held by a large number of private owners and (c) the private values could be altered by public planning decisions.
- (iii) It was in the sphere of “development value”, whether attaching it to land already developed with buildings, as in urban areas, or to land suitable for development in the predictable future, as in the case of fringe land around towns and cities, that the compensation difficulty was acute. Planning control might reduce the value of a particular piece of land, but over the country as a whole there was no loss.
- (iv) In theory only, “compensation and betterment” in a certain area of land should balance each other. In practice, however, they did not. The existing statutory code was limited in operation and was not designed to secure balance; it was not possible to devise any scheme for making the principle of balance effective.

On the “compensation” for existing development rights question, the Uthwatt Committee recommended that it should be paid, and it should be assessed for the whole country as a single sum. This sum was to be called the General Compensation Fund, and its amount would be determined at the land values of 31 March 1939 (Editorial 1944, p. 21). The spirit of this suggestion was not land nationalisation, but the acquisition by the State of the development rights in undeveloped land. This measure of unification under the State of the development rights, attaching to undeveloped land outside built-up areas, was considered as an essential minimum necessary to remove the conflict between public and private interest (Anonymous 1942d, pp. 170–171).

On the “betterment” question, it was suggested that, in view of the difficulties inherent in the existing system of collecting it under the Town and Country Planning Act 1932, and its failure to produce practical results, that system should be abandoned in favour of a scheme for a periodic levy of 75 per cent on future increases in annual site values (Anonymous 1942d, p. 174).

In order to manage the recommended system, the Uthwatt Committee considered that it would be a mistake to create a Government Department concerned with National Development, which would rank with existing Government Departments. The Committee thought it would be enough to appoint a Minister for National Development. This Minister should have no departmental cares, but he should have the advantage of a highly qualified staff informed as to economic conditions and needs of the country, competent to put forward proposals for consideration and to

advise on the economic and other questions arising out of schemes for development. Simultaneously, it was suggested that the broad principles of policy would be settled by the Cabinet after consideration by a Committee of ministers presided over by the Minister for National Development. Upon those schemes the Committee would have the assistance of the various Government Departments. As an outcome, the planning functions of the Minister of Works and Planning should fall directly within the sphere of the Minister for National Development (Anonymous 1942d, p. 176).

The publication of the Uthwatt Committee report engendered a strong reaction from some parts of the British Society. *A'J* noted in its Editorial (1942, p. 227) that the most surprising part of it was the one which dealt with the principles of compensation, mainly because this report had completely altered the perspective in which these matters had been viewed since the men responsible for it, unlike most writers on Town and Country Planning, were authorities on English Common Law.

However, the stronger opposition was presented from the side of the landowners. The Land Union's criticisms were among the forceful; it maintained that the Uthwatt Committee's suggestions were equal to the nationalisation of the Building Value of all land outside towns and that it was not convinced that fair compensation for this value would be received (PRO file: ED 136/330). Similar aspects were identified by the National Federation of Property Owners (1943), which argued that the property owners would be at the mercy of officials "as to what buildings in their opinion are below modern standards of fitness". Lastly, the Property Owners Protection Association Limited published a leaflet with the current issue of their official organ. *The Property Owner's Journal*, called "does the Uthwatt Report hit you too?" (Astragal 1943, p. 248). Meanwhile, the landowners' fears did not derive only from the fact that they would lose the present value of their land without receiving adequate compensation, but in addition from the fact that they would be deprived of a potential increase in the value of that land without any compensation at all.

Referring to whether the policy suggested by the Uthwatt Committee had a character of nationalisation or not, Watkins (1943, pp. 234–235) argued that nationalisation was a political issue and would not, therefore, be considered on its merits. According to his own words, nationalisation means, in brief, that the State becomes an intelligent reversioner to all land and actively interested in what is being done to it by the man in possession. If that is a bad thing, then, of course, nationalisation stands condemned. If it is good thing nationalisation is the only logical way of securing it. On the same subject, the Labour Administration (1945–1950) refused to implement the radical land-management proposals of the Uthwatt report (Hall et al. 1973, vol I, p. 618).

Given the above debate on the machinery for the control of land use and the administration of town and country planning, the British Government came to the decision in 1942, after giving full weight to the views expressed by the Scott and Uthwatt Committees, that, at that stage, the fullest measure of direct responsibility to Parliament should be maintained, with executive responsibility in England and Wales vested in a Minister of Town and Country Planning, and in Scotland in the Secretary of State of Scotland. There was much discussion in 1942 on the

appropriate central body to administer the town and country planning powers. The idea of a Commission was discarded, and on 26 January 1943 Sir William A Jowitt, the Paymaster General, introduced the Minister of Town and Country Planning Bill. The Bill was passed on 4 February 1943 (Cullingworth 1975, pp. 38–40 and 73) and William Morrison became its first minister. The new ministry, as the name suggests, gathered to itself all central town planning powers, responsibility for legislation and the civil servants previously concerned with planning (Wright 1982, p. 202).

It is to these administrative and statutory developments that we shall turn to in Chap. 6.

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Chapter 6

Administrative and Statutory Developments During the War

Abstract The number of administrative changes and statutory developments that were introduced and cumulatively contributed to the formation of the governmental reconstruction machinery is examined, namely the physical and non-physical reconstruction machinery. Especially, the investigation of this process of evolution is the object of this chapter. In terms of town and country planning, the significant step in the successive developments in reconstructing Britain after the Second World War was the establishment of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning. This ministry forms the core of the central planning authority institution.

Substantial change occurred during the period 1940–1945 in statutory planning terms. Besides the reports of the Barlow, Uthwatt and Scott Committees, as well as the public planning debate which was developed in those years, a remarkable number of administrative changes and statutory developments were introduced. Cumulatively, they contributed to the formation of the governmental reconstruction machinery. The investigation of this process of evolution will be the object of the present section of this book.

JB Cullingworth supports that (Cullingworth 1975, pp. 3–4), the origin of the reconstruction machinery establishment is to be found in the War Aims Committee of the Cabinet, which was set up on 23 August 1940. Its terms of reference were, first to make suggestions with regard to a post-war European and world system, and second to consider means of perpetuating the national unity achieved in the country during the war through a social and economic structure designed to secure equality of opportunity and service among all classes of the community.

Meanwhile, a Coalition Government had been, already, constituted in May 1940, to face the deteriorating war situation. This unique war atmosphere was arguably the principal factor shaping the creation of the reconstruction machinery, at least during the wartime years when its establishment began. It occurred through the following successive steps.

6.1 The First Attempts to Organise the Reconstruction Machinery

Despite the establishment of the War Aims Committee, the main changes in the central machinery of government took place from September 1940, when the old Office of Works became the Ministry of Works and Buildings within the new Coalition Government. It was largely the product of the personality of Sir (later Lord) John Reith (Addison 1982, p. 176), who was appointed as the first Minister of the new department. According to his own account, it attracted him because he was told it would be a wide-ranging Ministry, with control over reconstruction and planning after the war. Indeed, on 24 October, after much discussion, terms of reference were announced which confirmed the responsibilities (Reith 1949, p. 408). On that day, Attlee, as Lord Privy Seal, made the announcement to the House of Commons that the new Ministry was to consult with the departments and organisations concerned with reconstruction and to report to the Cabinet (Kohan 1952, p. 427).

The main aim of the Ministry of Works and Buildings was to apportion resources between war building work, and the repair of damage caused by enemy attack. Reith gathered round him a nucleus of enthusiastic planners and gave impetus to developments related to planning. In particular, he appointed Hugh Beaver as General Director of the Ministry. At the same time, he brought over to the new Ministry the pre-war town planning section of the Ministry of Health, headed by George Pepler (Wright 1982, pp. 198–199 and 202).

From the beginning of his appointment, Reith focused his interest on tasks related to the Barlow Commission's recommendations, notably by setting up the Uthwatt and Scott Committees, in the context of which lengthy discussions were developed and their reports were submitted two years later, that is in September 1942. Another action was to transfer all town and country planning functions to a reorganised Ministry of Works and Planning (Cherry 1974, p. 122); it happened on 11 February 1942, under the terms of the Minister of Works and Planning Act, when the new Ministry took over town planning powers from the Ministry of Health (Osborn 1948, p. 63). This development occurred after the following actions taken by Reith.

In December 1940, Reith presented his recommendations on "Reconstruction of Town and Country" to the War Cabinet, which referred to the defects of the pre-war machinery. The diagnosis was essentially the same as the Barlow Commission's (Cullingworth 1975, pp. 54–55). Specifically, Reith's main objectives were as follows (PRO file HLG 71/574: "13th March, 1941"):

- (i) Decentralisation of excessive concentrations of industry and population and redevelopment of congested areas.
- (ii) Utilisation of land and minerals to best advantage; preservation of fertile land for agriculture and market gardening; conservation and improvement of land for agricultural purposes, forestry, etc.

- (iii) Balance of industrial development and diversification of industry in (urban) areas; relationship between industry and agriculture.
- (iv) Redevelopment of damaged areas. Post-war use of buildings constructed for war purposes. Anticipation of conditions of depression.
- (v) Planning of local areas, including reasonable size and lay-out of towns; architectural, siting of factories and commercial centres, residential areas, public buildings, schools, transport and public utility services, open spaces, amenities, recreation.
- (vi) Coordinated development of:
 - (a) transport services—railways, roads, waterways, airports and access;
 - (b) power services—electricity, gas and water.
- (vii) Related development of other public utility and social services, including housing, education, and medical.
- (viii) Preservation of places of natural and historic interest.
- (ix) Preservation of disfigurement—individual buildings, petro stations and advertisements.

Additionally, Reith's recommendations called for the collection of the necessary information, especially that relating to war damage. He argued that in order to overcome this damage, reconstruction plans should be drawn up by a central organisation. At the same time, regional bodies should be also set up to consider schemes of restoration of war-damaged areas and redevelopment. Especially, referring to the question of regionalism of the reconstruction machinery, Reith stated that he believed in a central authority, but did not believe in that authority doing central planning. He envisaged its planning central buildings and main trunk roads, and then in its stopping as soon as it could stop, and sending its broad national schemes to those regional authorities and having them fill in all the details. Even more he believed in the lowest efficient local authority carrying out the schemes which would be finally approved (PRO *file HLG 71/1254*: "Minutes of proceedings...").

However, on 30 December 1940, that is before the Reith's memorandum had been examined officially, the Prime Minister appointed Arthur Greenwood, who was at that time responsible for the Secretariat of the War Aims Committee, Minister without Portfolio in charge of Reconstruction. The scope of the new Ministry was narrower, but more precise, than that of the War Aims Committee. According to the Prime Minister's words, the task of the new Minister was to plan in advance a number of practical steps which were indispensable to take if the society was to move forward as it should; steps which could be far longer and taken far more smoothly if they were made with something of the same kind of national unity as had been achieved under the pressure of this struggle for life. The scope of Rt Hon Friend's task was practical and had regard for national unity on the one hand and about three years as a limit on the other (Cullingworth, 1975, p. 5).

It is an important outcome deriving from the above developments, that in this initial stage—that is in the late 1940—the choice of the Cabinet was the foundation

of a coordinating governmental “instrument” having the form of a Minister without portfolio and who, in practical terms had to define his task and the limits of his actions taken from the responsibilities of other Departments. Thus, the establishment of a new Ministry with complete responsibility on the burning reconstruction question, as recommended the Reith memorandum, was abandoned. The explanation of this would be sought principally in the difficulties which rose in the internal affairs of the Government by the circulation of the Reith memorandum.

The first problems had already arisen during the transformation of the Office of Works into the Ministry of Works and Buildings. At that point, Reith supported the aspect that the new Ministry should be ready to take up responsibility for all building, planning and construction arising from the requirements of war and the post-war period. There was strong contradiction to these aspirations at that time originating from the Minister of Health (Kohan 1952, pp. 407–408). Consequently, when the outline of the new Ministry’s functions, by September 1940, had been agreed, Reith said that parts were left open for settlement when “the new man was on the job”. As a result, the controversy was avoided at that time, but it reappeared when Reith attempted to realise his aim to transfer all town and country planning responsibilities to a reorganised Ministry, by the submission of his memorandum to the Prime Minister. It is to be referred here that Reith’s behaviour was so extraordinary in these matters that he encouraged irresponsibly on 31 December 1940 a deputation from Coventry to plan on a large scale. Although, he knew that he had no power to back up his encouragement, but felt he was justified because the Coventry people were so demoralised. As Reith told them, that if he was in their position he would plan boldly and comprehensively; and that he would not at this stage worry about finance or local boundaries (Reith 1949, p. 424).

In this situation, the War Cabinet preferred to tackle the question by giving the reconstruction responsibilities to the Minister without Portfolio, Arthur Greenwood, but in a very general form. From the beginning the Minister in charge of reconstruction was not expected to do more than collate and coordinate, and in exceptional cases to inspire departments to produce official proposals (Cullingworth 1975, p. 5).

6.2 The Formation of the Non-physical Reconstruction Machinery

The Prime Minister referred Reith’s memorandum to an ad hoc Cabinet Committee comprised of Attlee, Lord Privy Seal, Greenwood, Minister without Portfolio, Brown, Secretary of State for Scotland, Crookshank, Financial Secretary of the Treasury, Reith, Minister of Works and Buildings, and Anderson, Lord President of the Council, as chairman. The Anderson Committee held four meetings between December 1940 and January 1941. In February 1941, it presented an agreed report to the Cabinet. The report stated that the most practical contribution would be, first to define the organisation required to assist the Minister of Works and Buildings in

carrying out the duties assigned to him in preparing for the physical reconstruction of town and country planning after the war. And second to indicate generally the scope of the preliminary studies which should be undertaken through his organisation (Cullingworth 1975, pp. 56–57).

The Committee had great difficulties in its discussions, but it did manage to give Reith an indication of the lines along which his work should develop, as follows (Cullingworth 1975, p. 59):

- (i) Compensation and betterment.
- (ii) Measures necessary to prevent action being taken during the war (e.g. by speculation in site values) which would prejudice the work of future reconstruction.
- (iii) Sample surveys of typical areas with a view to assessing the legal and administrative difficulties likely to arise in connection with the post-war redevelopment of urban areas devastated by air attack.
- (iv) Review of defects in existing legislation on town and country planning, and of general lines of legislation required for any system of planning on a regional or national basis.
- (v) Administrative machinery required (national, regional and local) for the operation of a national policy.
- (vi) Modification of existing structure of local government required to facilitate regional or national planning.
- (vii) Economics of different types of urban development and redevelopment (e.g. satellite towns or suburban development) including comparative expenditure on the connected services.
- (viii) Organisation of building trades, and general research into building methods and supply of building materials.

Work had already started on the first three items in the various involved departments. Actually, on (i) and (ii) Uthwatt had agreed to be the head of a research team, while on (iii), arrangements had been made for a survey to be undertaken by inspectors of the Ministry of Health of the heavily damaged areas of Birmingham, Bristol and Coventry. The War Cabinet considered the Anderson Committee's report in February 1941, and approved it. The only significant change made was the addition of the Ministry of Labour to the list of Departments to be represented on a new advisory committee, which was set up under the chairmanship of HG Vincent from the Ministry of Works and Buildings, as the Interdepartmental Committee on Reconstruction (Cullingworth, 1975, p. 59).

Furthermore, during 1941 a series of Ministerial, Departmental and Interdepartmental Committees were set up to cover the various matters of reconstruction. In this process, the Prime Minister and the Minister without Portfolio developed the following impressive activity, concerning the formation of the reconstruction machinery (PRO file CAB 124/599):

- (i) To arrange for the preparation of practical schemes of reconstruction, to which effect can be given in a period of, say, three years after the war. These

plans should have as their general aim the perpetuation of the national unity achieved in the country during the war, through a social and economic structure designed to secure equality of opportunity and service among all classes of the community.

- (ii) To prepare a scheme for a post-war European and world system, with particular regard to the economic needs of the various nations, and to the problem of adjusting the free life of small countries in a durable international order.

Later, on 1 October 1941, the Prime Minister approved the appointment of the Ministerial Committee on Economic Aspects of Reconstruction Problems. The new Committee constituted the following persons: the Minister without Portfolio (Chairman), the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Minister of Labour and National Service, the President of the Board of Trade, the Secretary of the Department of Overseas Trades, Sir G Crystal (Secretary), while other Ministers would be invited, or would be represented at meetings of the Committee at which matters of particular concern to their Department were to be dealt with; the terms of reference of the Committee were to consider and advise upon economic problems in connection with the preparation of reconstruction plans (PRO file CAB117/20: "W.F(G)(41)101").

It emerges from a letter of Arthur Greenwood sent in October 1941 to Sir John Anderson that this Committee was set up because of the vital importance of early discussions with the USA. Out of these discussions it was considered that undoubtedly wider economic issues would arise (PRO file CAB 124/599).

It is obvious from the above that in the terms of reference of both these Ministerial Committees, the whole matter of the reconstruction question was included at a general level. For this reason, the Minister without Portfolio Greenwood set up the following two interdepartmental and two Official Committees (PRO file CAB 124/599):

- (i) On 1 July, the Interdepartmental Committee on Social Insurance and Allied Services to undertake, with special reference to the interrelation of the schemes, a survey of the existing national scheme of social insurance and allied services, including workmen's compensation, and to make recommendations.
- (ii) On 6 August 1941, the Official Committee on Post-War External Problems and Anglo-American Co-operation, in the following terms of reference:
 - (a) To formulate the chief problems of post-war external economic policy with special reference to forthcoming discussions with the United States of America;
 - (b) To arrange for the preparation of memoranda on monetary financial and commercial policy, international control of raw materials, international investment and post-war relief and reconstruction;
 - (c) To formulate for Ministers the considerations which should be borne in mind in framing policy and to prepare interim material as far as possible for discussions with the United States of America if those discussions

become necessary before the general consideration of policy is complete.

- (iii) On 7 August 1941, the Interdepartmental Committee on Civil Aviation, to survey the whole field of Civil Aviation in its international, Imperial and national aspects, and to make recommendations on organisation and development both during the transitional period from war to peace conditions and thereafter.
- (iv) Finally on 31 October 1941, the Official Committee on Post-War Economic Problems, with the following terms of reference:
 - (a) To formulate the chief problems of post-war internal economic policy;
 - (b) To arrange for the preparation of memoranda on these problems;
 - (c) To formulate for Ministers the considerations which should be borne in mind in framing policy.

The above developments of organisational character must be considered as the foundation of the non-physical reconstruction machinery. By the end of 1941, the administrative machinery for dealing with reconstruction problems had taken definite shape, and had begun the battle with some of the chief questions of post-war home and foreign policy with the assistance of what soon became a substantial documentation built up by the co-operating departments (Cullingworth 1975, p. 10).

It becomes clear from the above, that all dimensions of the non-physical reconstruction plan had been grouped systematically: first, the social sector by the solution of insurance matters, in order to make easier the establishment of the necessary social consensus; second, the facing of the fundamental financing problem by co-operation with the USA; third, the improvement of the national and international communication system and finally, the investigation of the internal economic aspects for the recovery of the country.

Anyway, this coordinating machinery, which seemed to be so “simple and comprehensive”, became “complex and mysterious” in the following war years. Arthur Greenwood resigned from the office of Minister without Portfolio on 3 March 1942, and Sir William Jowitt succeeded him as Paymaster General. That is, not as a member of the War Cabinet. Furthermore, the Committee on the Economic Aspects of Reconstruction Problems was dissolved and its function was taken over by a reconstituted Ministerial Committee on Reconstruction Problems, under the chairmanship of the Paymaster General (PRO *file CAB 124/599*). The story of reconstruction in this period became more and more diffused and the administrative threads more and more entangled.

It could be concluded here that these developments reflect changes at the administrative level in reconstruction policy choices. Seeking the explanation of this phenomenon that as soon as reconstruction became a burning question, it was inevitable that control should pass to the senior ministers, should be accepted as correct (Cullingworth 1975, pp. 21–22). Indeed, besides the work on the coordination of reconstruction by the responsible minister, the various aspects of reconstruction had started to be faced substantively by the other ministers too. In these

fields, the interventions of ministers within the sphere of their responsibilities were gradually increasing, while the role of the central co-ordination of reconstruction as a whole was gradually eroded.

6.3 Developments in the Physical Reconstruction Machinery

In the area of physical reconstruction activity, the responsible ministers attempted to obtain a more effective participation in the spheres of their power. This possibility was given to them because, as the years passed, the reconstruction machinery had to move towards practical action on the one hand, and on the other, a new land policy suitable to face the needs of extensive reconstruction in the bombed cities had to be formulated. A sign of this evolution at the administrative level was the inclusion of the Minister of Works and Planning in the Ministerial Committee on Reconstruction Problems in July 1942. It happened, whereas he was not a member of either the Cabinet Committee on Reconstruction Problems of February 1941, nor of the first constitution of the Ministerial Committee on Reconstruction Problems of March 1942.

In this framework, Reith did not feel comfortable after Greenwood was given overall responsibility for reconstruction. His unease arose mainly because the boundaries between non-physical and physical reconstruction were not clear. As a consequence, controversies developed between John Reith and Arthur Greenwood, John Reith and Ernest Brown, the Minister of Health, as well as between Ernest Bevin, the Minister of Labour, and Arthur Greenwood on the occasion of the establishment of the Ministerial Committee on Economic Aspects of Reconstruction Problems.

In fact, it emerges from a letter sent by Greenwood to Sir John Anderson, MP, on 20 October 1941, that Greenwood had explained to Reith that the previous referred Committee had been set up because of the vital importance of early discussions with the USA, as it was also referred before, and that out of these discussions would undoubtedly arise the consideration of wider economic issues (*PRO file CAB 117/20*: "letter sent by Greenwood ..."). Before this letter, another correspondence had developed between Greenwood and Bevin about the same matter. This latter controversy was resolved by the intervention of the Prime Minister, who sent a letter to Bevin on 19 May 1941, writing the following (*PRO file CAB 21/1583*):

(...) I have read the correspondence between yourself and Greenwood on the question of membership of the Reconstruction Problems Committee. I am sorry that you are not fully satisfied with the arrangements made. I note, however, that you propose to give a trial to the plan suggested for the representation of your Department. I hope it will work satisfactorily, but if not, you can of course raise the matter again with the Chairman of the Committee. It is, of course, clear that all the really important issues of principle will have to come to the War Cabinet after they have been worked out in the Reconstruction Problems Committee. You are no more committed to any conclusions reached than I am (...).

Finally, as Reith refers in his autobiography, Brown (the Minister of Health) accused him for trying to sidetrack him and his ministry (Reith 1949, p. 427). Despite, the controversies between the above ministers, Reith attempted to realise the following very important steps, concerning the formulation of the physical reconstruction machinery.

Reith's first action towards the above goal was to gather around him, as it has already been referred before, all the town planners with high reputation of the country. It was February 1941, when he constituted his own Reconstruction Group to undertake work on reconstruction and town planning problems. Among the member of the group were W Holford, J Dower, HC Bradshaw and Thomas Sharp. In April of the same year, Reith appointed a "Consultative Panel" of 22 members including industrialists, trade unionists, geographers, as well as FJ Osborn and P Abercrombie. He also established a small full-time team of "staff experts" containing Holford, as the leader, Bradshaw, Dower, and HG Vincent, a permanent civil servant, as the administrative guide (Cherry and Penny 1986, 89–91). It also emerges from a PRO document that this Reith's attempt to formulate the physical reconstruction machinery was strongly supported by his consultant planners; for example, Abercrombie wrote to Dower on 20 February 1941, that Leslie Scott and himself had been especially pressing Lord Reith not to give way to the Ministers of Health and Transport to keep their planning powers, since they would like him to be a shadowy background figure like Addison was after the last war. (PRO file HLG 86/20).

During 1941 and 1942, the Reconstruction Group examined three teams of problems; first, prevention of wartime action that might hinder proper reconstruction; second, existing planning machinery and the new legislation needed; and lastly, the relative costs of different layouts and kinds of building development (Wright 1982, p. 200). In respect of these developments, Reith invited the London County Council and the Corporation of the City of London to prepare provisional plans of redevelopment for the County and City, respectively. These will be the objectives of extensive analysis in later Chapters of this book. In addition, after the heavy enemy raids on Coventry he had asked the City Council, as we also have referred, to also prepare plans for the reconstruction of that city.

The second step taken by Reith was the conceptualising of the establishment of the central planning authority in statutory terms; an attempt which met strong controversy in the interior of the War Cabinet. Reith's concept was based on the interim report of The Expert Committee on Compensation and Betterment, which was submitted on 25 April 1941 and was signed by AA Uthwatt, as Chairman, J Barr, CG Eve and R Evershed. Its recommendations were based on the assumption that a governmental instrument would be established (PRO file CAB 117/114). Reith wanted this authority to be set up forthwith, but other ministers adopted a stop-gap solution of a Council of ministers, with Reith chairing a body including the Minister of Health and the Secretary of State for Scotland (Cullingworth 1975, p. 16).

It is necessary to draw attention here to the basic departmental positions on this subject, as stated by officials of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Works and Buildings, respectively. The former Ministry officials maintained that the Minister of Works and Buildings is responsible for considering what the shape of

the law and administration of town and country planning should be, but not for the actual preparation of plans, which should remain with the Ministry of Health, as the central planning authority (PRO file HLG 71/574: "Letter to G Vincent..."). At the same time, a memorandum prepared by the latter Ministry stated that according to their view at that stage the preparatory work on the new system and on the plans should be concentrated in one organisation (PRO file HLG 71/574: "13th March 1941").

This issue was finally resolved in the short term by the foundation of a ministerial Council on the lines suggested within the Cabinet. This decision was implemented by the House of Lords on 17 July 1941 (Reith 1949, p. 430). Before the end of October, the ministerial Council had agreed all the clauses of a new Bill to strengthen planning powers. When T Johnston, the Secretary of State of Scotland, and E Brown, the Minister of Health, finally agreed on the development of a structure of powers, it led mathematically to the creation of a new ministry. The purpose and terms of reference of this Council were to ensure that the administration of the Town and Country Planning Acts and of any legislation implementing the recommendations made in the First Report of the Uthwatt Committee should proceed in conformity with long-term planning policy, as it progressively developed (PRO file HLG 71/1254: "House of Lords...").

Furthermore, Greenwood had already been convinced that Reith should take over town planning responsibilities from the Ministry of Health, even though he had not been in favour of a central planning authority at all at the end of August (Reith 1949, pp. 432–433). A new Minister of Town and Country Planning was therefore proposed. However, Reith, as Gordon Cherry supported (Cherry 1974, p. 122), had gone "too far, too fast"; subsequent developments would not favour him. On 11 February 1942, under the terms of the Minister of Works and Planning Act, the Minister of Works and Buildings became Minister of Works and Planning, and took over from the Minister of Health the powers of the central government under the Town and Country Planning Acts, while the Secretary of State of Scotland remained responsible for the exercise of these functions in Scotland (Osborn 1948, p. 63). Reith became the first Minister of Works and Planning, but within a fortnight he was asked to resign and was replaced by Lord Portal (Cherry 1982, p. 36).

The Scott and Uthwatt Reports were published after Reith's resignation, in August 1942. Both reports were referred to the Official Committee on Internal Economic Problems, which reported in October 1942 with recommendations relating to the constitution of the central planning authority. The Committee could not reach a unanimous decision. A minority favoured a commission responsible to a minister who would be chairman of a ministerial committee and acting under his general directions. However, the majority had serious doubts as to whether such a system could be applied with equal advantage to matters of such importance as the control of land use. The arguments continued when the report was discussed by the Committee on Reconstruction Problems. The conclusion of the Reconstruction Problems Committee was presented to the War Cabinet in November 1942. The Committee recommended that a separate ministry of planning should be established with the responsibility for control of the use of land, whether this was exercised

through town and country planning schemes prepared by local authorities or otherwise. The War Cabinet accepted the proposals in November 1942, and on 26 January 1943, Sir William Jowitt, the Paymaster General, introduced the Minister of Town and Country Planning Bill. The proposal of the above Bill was to make provision in connection with the appointment of a Minister of Town and Country Planning; to provide for the transfer to that Minister of certain statutory functions; and to provide for the establishment of statutory commissions for the purpose of exercising such functions in relation to the use and development of land in England and Wales (Cullingworth 1975, pp. 71–73).

The Bill was passed on 4 February 1943, and W.S. Morrison was appointed first Minister of Town and Country Planning (Cullingworth 1975, pp. 73 and 75), while the Minister of Works and Planning became Minister of Works. One of the first activities of W.S. Morrison was to receive the press representatives in his room at the Ministry for his first Press Conference as Minister of Town and Country Planning on 27 May 1943. His statement there included the following points of interest: first, his duty had been defined by Parliament as that of “securing consistency and continuity in the framing and execution of a national policy with respect to the use and development of land throughout England and Wales”; the creation of this new Ministry embodied the decision of Parliament that in future national considerations should govern more directly and more actively than the task of making the best use of the country’s 37 million acres; second, he did not wish to minimise the importance of early decisions upon certain major recommendations of the Barlow, Scott and Uthwatt Commissions, but stressed the great financial issues and difficult legal problems involved in these decisions, which also concerned social problems that demanded very careful handling by Government; third, he considered that the Barlow, Scott and Uthwatt Reports emphasised the complex factors about which information should be collated before a country could be well and truly planned; “The Central Planning Authority”, said the Uthwatt Report, “will base its action on organised research into the social and economic aspects of the use and development of land (PRO file HLG 71/1255).

At that time, the main objective of the new ministry was the preparation of the legislation concerning town and country planning, and especially, land policy. The above is additionally confirmed in a note prepared by the Ministry of Town and Country Planning for the Lord President; indeed, it was stated there that the whole basis of planning legislation would need reviewing in order to give statutory expression of their new conception of the objects of planning (Cullingworth 1975, 84–85).

According to the previous analysis it can be summarised that in terms of town and country planning, the significant step in the successive developments in reconstructing Britain after the Second World War was the establishment of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning. This Ministry forms the core of the central planning authority institution. The process of its creation and development was complicated and long-term, mainly because it was expected to intervene in responsibilities previously delegated to other departments of the government and to become a new, powerful ministry (Marmaras 2003, p. 15). In Britain, the catalyst

was the war; its adverse effects on the man-scale environment created the ostensible social consensus which facilitated the introduction of progressive institutions in all levels of social life. The legislation preparatory work of the new Ministry will be reviewed in Chap. 7.

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Chapter 7

Town Planning Legislation Under the Coalition Government

Abstract The legislative preparatory work of the new Ministry of Town and Country Planning is reviewed in this chapter. An extensive description of the Town Planning (Interim Development) Act, 1943 and the Town and Country Planning Act, 1944, as well as the accompanying discussions and negotiations between Churchill and the Labour leaders are presented. The wartime environment function is manifest in two ways: first, it helped to bring to the fore the need for reorganisation of the planning system, and secondly, it had to preserve the atmosphere of unity in the Coalition Cabinet.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, in September 1939, Britain was ruled by a Conservative Government under Neville Chamberlain, who had entered 10 Downing Street as Prime Minister in May 1937. The Chamberlain government had 418 seats in the House of Commons to the 167 seats held by the Labour Party, and an overall majority of more than two hundred (Addison 1982, p. 53). But, after the fall of Chamberlain in May 1940, Winston Churchill succeeded him as Prime Minister of a Coalition Government consisting of all parties—bar the Communists—and of no party (Blake 1972, p. 248). Although, Churchill had a big majority of seats in the House of Commons, the Coalition Government was decided to be supported by all parties to promote national unity.

In general, the legislative work of a coalition government was formed, to a greater or lesser extent, as an outcome of compromise between the various political parties which constituted this type of Cabinet. Churchill and his circle on the one hand, and the Labour leaders on the other, were to act as twin centres of power in Coalition, with Churchill at the head of the military and diplomatic machine, and Labour responsible for civilian affairs.

Only at the end of the war the problem started to become clear within the governmental circles; especially, when the legislative context of the post-war reconstructive action was discussed. An example of this development is contained in a long memorandum prepared in June 1944 from the Minister of Economic Warfare, the Earl of Selborne, referring to the Town and Country Planning Bill, in which he pointed out that it could sometimes be difficult for Conservatives, Liberals and Socialists to agree about post-war legislation. In Town and Country Planning,

the Socialist and the Liberal would wish to extend State interference with private trade and property much further than most the Conservatives would think necessary or desirable. Many Conservatives held that State planning could easily be carried to a point where it would impede development and impair freedom, without improving anything (PRO file CAB 123/51).

Given these aspects, considerable progress in policy discussions was made during the war, and there was important legislation in various matters of home affairs, and of course in planning legislation issues which were needed for the reconstruction activity. The detection of this kind of innovations will be achieved through the analysis of the main legislation corpus of the war period.

The setting up of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning in the middle of the Second World War is to be considered as a turning point in the process of the establishment of a British Central Planning Authority. Actually, John Reith, the Minister of Health, and the Secretary of State for Scotland drafted the Bill, based on the Interdepartmental Committee's recommendations, and presented it to the Cabinet Committee on Reconstruction Problems in November 1941. Despite its title—Town and Country Planning (Reconstruction) Bill—it dealt with the extension of interim development, control over the whole country, as well as with reconstruction. The above Bill went through many forms; in July 1942, it was entitled the Town and Country Planning {Temporary Provisions} Bill to prevent superfluous development rights from being acquired under the Town and Country Planning Act 1932, during the period of control of building operations imposed under the Emergency Powers (Defense) Acts, 1939 and 1940 (Cullingworth 1975: p. 79 and 89).

The Bill became later the Town and Country Planning (Amendment) Bill; then the Town and Country Planning (Interim Provisions) Bill; and finally, the Town and Country Planning (Interim Development) Bill, which was presented by WS Morrison, the Minister of Town and Country Planning, in the House of Commons in April 1943. At the end of this legislative process during the war, two Acts were passed. This latter enactment as the Town and Country Planning (Interim Development) Act, 1943, which extended planning control to all land and made it effective in the “interim development” period before schemes become operative, and the Town and Country Planning Act, 1944, which, as we will see immediately after, enabled local authorities to tackle their war damage.

7.1 The Town and Country Planning (Interim Development) Act, 1943

The Town and Country Planning (Interim Development) Act, 1943, which will be referred as “the 1943 Act”, received the Royal Assent on 22 July, 1943. Its objectives as set out were, first to bring under planning control land which was not subject to a scheme or resolution under the Town and Country Planning Act, 1932, and secondly, to secure more effective control of interim development. The 1943

Act applied solely to “the interim development period”; that is, the period between the date of the resolution to prepare a scheme and the date on which the scheme would become operative. The 1943 Act consisted of 13 sections.

As a Bill, the future 1943 Act, was faced in the House of Commons with great skepticism by all the political parties. WS Morrison, the Minister of Town and Country Planning, who was a Unionist (Conservative), in introducing it, stated that the Bill was but the forerunner of several Bills that should inevitably follow if the real new structure of town and country planning was to be erected (Anonymous 1943, p. 330). He also explained that interim development was an inevitable stage in any planning machinery, and was located between the time when the planning authority passed a resolution to plan and the final conferral of statutory force upon the planning scheme. In order to emphasise this need, he pointed out that before the passing of the Bill about five per cent of the area of England and Wales was subject to statutory schemes which were in force; the remainder was either not subject to a planning resolution at all or was in the stage of interim development, according to the provisions of the 1932 Act. After the passing of the Bill, he argued, interim development would cover 95 % of the land of England and Wales, the other 5 % being already subject to statutory schemes.

Greenwood, Labour, and Mander, Liberal, answering Morrison, the Minister of Town and Country Planning, raised the question of landowners’ control and compensation respectively, and stated that problems of this sort could not be solved without adopting the Royal Commission proposals, in particular those of the Uthwatt Report. In addition, Lewis Silkin, Labour, declared that he welcomed the Bill without prejudice and on the understanding that it was only the beginning of a further measure, or measures, which would allow complete planning powers to be conferred upon local authorities and the Ministry, which he regarded as essential and without which, in his view, all talk of post-war planning reconstruction and redevelopment was pure mockery (Anonymous 1943, pp. 332–334).

On the other hand, Captain Ernest S Watkins, in his article “Planning will end private property”, published in *AJ* on 30 September 1943, referring to the formation of the existing machinery after the passing of the 1943 Act, supported that the keynote of the Act as it stood was largely permissive. A local authority might exercise its powers to initiate the formation of larger planning units to replace it, or to acquire land along new roads to control subsequent development, or to press claims for betterment against landowners who would in fact receive fortuitous advantage (Watkins 1943, p. 235).

Watkins added, also, that the 1943 Act presented the following disadvantages: first, that the areas and constitution of local authorities did not make them particularly suited to be planning authorities, and secondly, that their financial interests were often opposed to a sound planning policy. As a response to the above difficulties, he proposed, first, that the framing of policy should be in the hands of a central planning authority working through democratically controlled area committees; secondly, that the work of supervising and controlling development should be entrusted to a Holding Corporation, which would pay out to the owner the value of the land from money borrowed from the State; and thirdly, that development

should be left to individual owners, who should enjoy security of tenure subject to conditions laid down in leases, on which private title to land would in future be based (Watkins 1943, pp. 234–236).

Ending, we could conclude in short that the 1943 Act, going as far as was appropriate for the war circumstances, expressed the vital issue which had been arisen in the wartime, when on the one hand, no development or planning was going on, but when speculation was already gradually taking place; actually, active buyers of real estate had appeared during the war, who, according to Oliver Marriott (1967, p. 45), had the following philosophy: if the Germans won the war, everyone was undone, themselves included, while if the British won, prices were bound to recover from the extremely depressed wartime level. On the other hand, the tradition continued whereby planning control was entrusted to local authorities, arming them with wider and more effective powers.

The method adopted, at that time, was to extend “interim development control”¹ to all land in the country not already covered by a scheme or a resolution to prepare one. The effect was that all planning authorities, who had not yet done so, were assumed to be preparing a scheme for their area, while their possibilities were strengthened during the “interim” period by provisions enabling them, for the first time, to take immediate enforcement action against development which threatened their planning proposals or was not in accordance with the terms of a permission, and to revoke or modify permission already given, subject to payment of compensation (MLGP 1951, p. 8).

Finally, the 1943 Act did not materially differ from the Bill as printed, apart from the addition of two sections: Sect. 8, as to the interim protection of trees and woodlands, and Sect. 12, offering special provisions as to London and the addition of a Sect. 7 to Sect. 5, which referred to the deposit of waste materials (Wikely 1943, p. 270).

7.2 The Town and Country Planning Act, 1944

As we have already referred in Sect. 7.1, the 1943 Act was designed to stop the most conspicuous gaps in the system of planning control. Its more complex successor, the Town and Country Planning Act, 1944—it will be referred to as “the 1944 Act”—was directed towards making adequate powers available to local authorities in reconstructing and redeveloping their towns after the Great War.

According to a Memorandum prepared by Lord Woolton, the Minister of Reconstruction, and submitted to the War Cabinet on 10th January 1944, the Reconstruction Committee started to search for effective means of controlling land

¹ The development control process was an administrative expedient born of the inadequacy of the system to meet the demand for new housing. The second feature of the development control system as it emerged in the 1920 s and the 1930 s was its discretionary nature, the way in which it left decision-makers considerable latitude in the decisions they took (Booth 1999, p. 278).

use in January 1944, having as an aim to provide a solid foundation for the physical reconstruction of the towns and the countryside after the end of the war, by the introduction of a Town and Country Planning Bill in the House of Commons. Woolton stated that proposals based on the recommendations of the Uthwatt Report for the public acquisition of development rights and an annual levy on site values would be hotly contested in Parliament, therefore, the Committee sought an alternative solution which might command a more general measure of support.

The Main Proposals of the Above Referred Committee's Scheme were as follows (PRO File CAB 123/51, 12 June 1944)

- (i) The development rights of the landowner remain vested in him but cannot be exercised until approval of a proposed development or redevelopment has been obtained.
- (ii) When approval has been obtained, the landowner will pay a Betterment Charge if the value of the land has been increased by the approval.
- (iii) If approval is refused, the landowner will receive fair compensation unless under the existing law he would not be entitled to it.
- (iv) Fair compensation means compensation for loss of development value existing on 31 March 1939. No compensation will be paid for loss of any development value accruing after that date.
- (v) The precise formula for determining fair compensation will be settled after a period of 5 years. More information will then be available to assist the Government in avoiding the payment of any excess over fair compensation due to the element of "floating" value.
- (vi) Land will be divided into three classes: "green" land, "white" land and "built-on" land.

Two days later, on 12 June 1944, another Memorandum was submitted to the War Cabinet prepared by the Earl of Selborne, the Minister of Economic Warfare. According to it, the suggested by the Reconstruction Committee formula of the 1939 market value was grossly inequitable and derisory, unless it would be related to the post-war cost of replacement which was greatly affected by the altered value of money. To support his view, he argued that the principle of "cost of reinstatement" had already been admitted in the War Damage Act, 1943, in which the owners of blitzed property were entitled either to "cost of works" payment or a "1939 value" payment.

At their meeting on 9 October, the War Cabinet appointed a Committee to give further consideration to some questions raised by the Town and Country Planning Bill, and especially this referring to the formula of the 1939 market value. The Committee requested WS Morrison, the Minister of Town and Country Planning, to submit to the War Cabinet the principles upon which they were agreed. According to Morrison's Memorandum of 11 October 1944, the general principle maintained that compensation in respect of land and buildings should be assessed by reference to prices current on 31 March. No general increase should be allowed automatically, in respect of any class of property, but exceptional provision was made for some categories of owner-occupiers; the owner-occupier might be defined as the

owner who was in de facto occupation at the date of notice to treat or who could prove to the satisfaction of a tribunal that he had both the right and the intention to resume or take over occupation within 5 years of the date of the notice to treat or at the end of the war, whichever was the sooner (PRO file CAB 123/51: 2, 11th October 1944).

The 1944 Act received the Royal Assent on 17 November 1944. It covered a great variety of subjects and referred to many other previous Acts. In the main, it dealt with the acquisition and development of land and not with the form and content of planning schemes. What, then, were the provisions of major importance introduced by the 1944 Act in terms of urban reconstruction?

Most important of all, it established for the first time that a local authority might undertake or promote comprehensive development or redevelopment; and might acquire and develop, or lease for development, any land which they considered it necessary to acquire in order to secure that it be used as their plan proposed. This provision would be implemented in rebuilding the civic and commercial centres of the cities which suffered the most concentrated raiding, such as London, Bristol, Canterbury, Coventry, Dover, Exeter, Hull, Liverpool, Manchester, Portsmouth, Plymouth, Southampton and Swansea (MLGP 1951, pp. 38–39).

Furthermore, the 1944 Act in its reconstruction provisions embodied the principle that, because of the multiplicity of ownerships usually involved, the key to proper redevelopment of towns was public acquisition, to be followed either by the disposal of the land to private developers, under conditions ensuring that they would themselves carry out development in accordance with the plan for the area, or by direct development by the local authority.

But, it is necessary to give some account of the provisions for acquisition and development in the 1944 Act. It provided that land required for dealing with war damage might be acquired in two ways; land which the local authority needed urgently, before they had worked out their plan of comprehensive development, could be bought ad hoc whether compulsorily or by agreement. However, local authorities themselves criticized the 1944 Act on the ground that it provided insufficient Exchequer contribution towards the losses they would incur in the acquisition and clearing of war-damaged land before revenue began to come in from new building (MLGP 1951, pp. 40–41).

In practical terms, the value of the 1944 Act can be expressed as follows. A slow start was made on reconstruction of the war-damaged business and commercial city centres, owing to the fact that effort had been concentrated on other more vital work, principally on building houses and schools, and on industrial recovery; the amount of investment that it had been possible to allow in the reconstruction of blitzed city centres was only £500,000 in 1949; in 1950 this was increased to £1,500,000, and the amount for 1951 was £4,000,000 (MLGP 1951, p. 46).

However, the first steps towards comprehensive redevelopment of inner London were undertaken under the powers contained in the 1944 Act to declare areas or extensive war damage subject to compulsory purchase in order to enable them to be laid out afresh and redeveloped as a whole. Examples of the 1944 Act implementation were: first, the Stepney-Poplar area in London, which covered 1,312

acres; secondly, the South Bank of the Thames between Westminster Bridge and Blackfriars Bridge; and thirdly, in the City of London, an area of more than 200 acres declared to be needing comprehensive redevelopment (MLGP 1951, p. 76; especially for Stepney-Poplar: Stephenson 1949, p. 137).

The above legislative developments could not be considered as in any way equivalent to the creation of the Central Planning Authority establishment, as it had been conceived by the Barlow, Uthwatt and Scott reports. The main reason for this was the wartime environment itself, which functioned in two ways: first, it helped to bring to the fore the need for reorganisation of the planning system, and secondly, it had to preserve the atmosphere of unity in the Coalition Cabinet. In other words, the years of peace had to come in order to produce the final, practical form of the urban reconstruction machinery. This issue will be faced in Chap. 8. This identifies a policy of greater State intervention in planning matters, which could largely be explained by a general reduction of Conservatives influence.

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Chapter 8

The 1947 Planning Act and the Reaction to It

Abstract In this chapter, the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947 is analysed. It constituted the final, practical form of the urban reconstruction machinery after the end of the war. In addition, the reaction to the 1947 Act and the revision of the planning system by the Conservatives is also examined through the issue of the Planning Acts of 1951, 1954 and 1959. Nevertheless, the principal Act remained the 1947 Act, especially parts I–IV, which dealt with the making and amendment of development plans, the day-to-day control of development through the grant or refusal of planning permission for development, and the acquisition and disposal of land for planning purposes, were in force during the whole of the 1950s.

In contrast to the wartime period, the first post-war years were characterised by the domination by a strong Labour Administration in the British political scene. After the end of the hostilities on 8 May 1945, all three main parties went into the general election, on 26 July 1945, committed to principles of social and economic reconstruction which their leaders had endorsed as members of the Coalition Government (Addison 1982, p. 14). The declaration of the poll results found the Labour Party to have 183 seats more than the Conservatives. Labour won 393 seats, the Conservatives and their allies 210, the Liberals 12, the Common Wealth 1 and the heterogeneous Independents 17. The disparity in votes cast was as follows: Labour polled 11,967,000 (48.0 %) against 9,972,000 (39.8 %) for the Conservatives (Morgan 1985, p. 7 and 41). Furthermore, Kenneth Morgan, characterises the period between July 1945 and October 1951 as one of the most crucial in British history and comparable with the governments of Peel, Disraeli, Asquith, and Lloyd George, and perhaps Gladstone's first term in office.

A significant debate had developed in the previous past concerning the social context of this first post-war administration. In Marwick's (1986 p. 17), *British Society since 1945*, the period from 1945 to around 1957 is characterised by the domination of a social consensus, which was a legacy of wartime. Similar aspects were detected by Lionel Esher in his book *A Broken Wave: The rebuilding of England, 1940–1980*. Among the others, Esher argued (1981, pp. 48–49) that the post-war consensus should have lasted for 20 years. There were two reasons for this: first, it was bipartisan; second, it was flexible.

Paul Addison in his book: *The Road to 1945*, saw additionally the post-war Labour Government as the legatees of the consensus of the Second World War (1982, pp. 270–278). At the same time, Ralph Miliband and David Coates have seen the Attlee government as essentially “opportunistic”, dedicated to a sterile parliamentarism rather, than to genuine socialist change. According to this interpretation, the years after 1945 were strictly non-revolutionary (Morgan 1985, p. 5).

Another estimation of the post-war political scene comes from IH Taylor; he argued that the early period of the Attlee government, perhaps down to mid-1947, is characterised by a sustained shift to the Left, unique in British history; only in the post-1947 era was this Leftwards momentum checked, and even reversed, by a variety of forces, including external financial pressures and Labour’s own internal party conflicts from 1951 onwards.

Finally, Kenneth Morgan presented the post-war Labour Cabinet as a government with great vision in domestic questions, which it expressed by measures related to the nationalisation of some components of economic activity; such as that of the Bank of England (1946), civil aviation (1946), cable and wireless (1946), coal (1946), railways (1947), gas (1948), iron and steel (1949) on the one hand, and on the other by a welfare policy (Morgan 1985, pp. 39, 97–98, 157 and 172–173). A policy, which led, among other things, to the establishment of the National Health Service (1946), National Insurance (1946) and National Assistance (1948).

The above policy had been accepted by the popular strata, as it could be proved by the general election results of those 7 years. Indeed, in 1945 the Labour Party, as we have already seen, received 48.0 % and the Conservatives 39.6 %; in 1950, Labour still secured 46.1 %, while the Conservatives reached 43.5 %, thanks mainly to a fall in the votes cast for the other parties. Finally, in 1951 Labour’s share actually rose to its highest ever at 46.8 %, which was 0.8 % ahead of the Conservatives, but they lost their parliamentary majority thanks to the single-member-constituency system (Marwick 1986, p. 103).

In addition to these developments in electoral opinion, the other holders of legislative authority also did not create serious difficulties for the post-war Labour Government. As Kenneth Morgan pointed out (1985, p. 81–90), the monarchy provided no obstacle of any significance. The House of Lords did not offer any real resistance to governmental legislative work except a lengthy fight over the Transport Nationalisation Bill in 1947. Anyway, the City of London was not monolithic ideologically, though the Stock Exchange showed a few signs of politically-motivated speculation against the Attlee government.

The issue of the Town and Country Planning Act in 1947 ought to be placed in the above described context. The Act gave greater powers to local authorities over the environment, and a government levy of increases in land values through development, as will become clear later. Anyway, before entering into this Act’s provisions it is necessary to go through the politico-economic problems which the Labour Government was facing in that period.

As Kenneth Morgan pointed out (1985, p. 331–348): “1947 was a year of almost unrelieved disaster” for Britain. This also becomes apparent from the data of Table 8.1, which shows the development of the Balance of Payments during the

Table 8.1 United Kingdom balance of payments, 1946–1953 (in million £)

	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953
Current account debits	1,836	2,212	2,347	2,545	2,925	4,259	3,741	3,640
Current account credits	1,536	1,769	2,348	2,576	3,225	3,852	3,871	3,718
US defense aid (grant less US share of counterpart)						+4	+121	+102
Balance	−298	−443	+1	+31	+300	−403	+251	+180

Source The data are taken from: (Morgan 1985, p. 511), and are based on United Kingdom Balance of Payments, 1946–1955 (Cmd. 9585), pp. (1955–1956) xix, 221ff

period 1946–1953. As can be seen, the largest deficit on current account (c. £ 443,000,000) was recorded in 1947.

The main causes of this development were rooted in the economic policy of “cheap money”, which was implemented by Hugh Dalton, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, expressed from July 1945 to November 1947. “Cheap money” meant that a large volume of Treasury bills was issued which formed the basis of credit expansion by the banks. There were those who criticised this policy on technical grounds, though it was generally popular as the smaller investor seemed happy enough and the stock-market flourished until the end of 1946. However, in the spring of 1947, it had become obvious that things were going seriously wrong; in the second quarter of 1947, that is from 1 April to 31 July, there were signs of a major crisis, as the volume of exports fell sharply below even the level of the third quarter of 1946. The last hope of the Government was the loan negotiated with the United States of America in December 1945. The loan became available from July 1946, while a serious drain of dollars began from the start of 1947. On top of this growing balance of payments crisis (Table 8.2), appeared the even more alarming problem of the convertibility of sterling, due to taking effect on 15 July 1947, one year precisely from the passage of the USA loan.

By 19 July 1947, it was announced that Britain had had to withdraw a further £ 150,000,000 of the above loan. The drain of the dollar reserves was colossal. In the

Table 8.2 United Kingdom net gold and dollar deficit/surplus, 1946–1952 (In million £)

1946	January–June	−80	1950	January–June	+78
	July–December	−146		July–December	+209
1947	January–June	−469	1951	January–June	+148
	July–December	−555		July–December	−564
1948	January–June	−254	1952	January–June	−232
	July–December	−169		July–December	+57
1949	January–June	−239			
	July–December	−142			

Source The data are taken from: (Morgan 1985, p. 512), and are based on *Annual Statements on United Kingdom Balance of Payments*

first week of convertibility, the loss was \$106,000,000; in the second, it was \$126,000,000; in the third, it was \$127,000,000; in the week ending 16 August, it came to no less than \$183,000,000. On 20 August, it was announced that the USA had agreed that the convertibility be immediately suspended on “an emergency and temporary” basis. It was apparent that a new financial policy had to be determined from the above date. This policy, known as “the policy of austerity”, began with the autumn budget of November 1947, and the appointment as Chancellor of the Exchequer of Sir Stafford Cripps, who was till that time Minister of Economic Affairs. The new policy was expressed by heavy cuts in dollar imports, a sharp reduction of consumer purchasing power, and new rates of purchase and profits tax. In this framework of developing economic crisis, the new planning Bill, with its strong appeal to the Left wing of the Labour Government, was introduced in the House of Commons by the Minister of Town and Country Planning, Lewis Silkin, in January 1947.

8.1 The Town and Country Planning Act, 1947

The Town and Country Planning Act, 1947, hereafter cited as “the 1947 Act,” received the Royal Assent in August 1947; however, came into general operation on 1 July 1948. The new planning Act sought to create a new body of town and country planning legislation by embodying the main recommendations of the Barlow, Uthwatt and Scott Committees’ reports. It is necessary to be noted here that the 1947 Act repealed also the Town and Country Planning Act, 1932, part of the Restriction of Ribbon Development Act, 1935, the Town and Country (Interim Development) Act, 1943, and most of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1944 (MLGP 1951, p. 11).

In addition, if we examine from a different point of view the 1947 Act, it was considered as the third part of the legislative trilogy issued in the first post-war years having as an aim the location of industry, the overcrowding of towns, the question of compensation and betterment, and the coherent planning of large areas; the other two were the Distribution of Industry Act, 1945, and the New Towns Act, 1946.

If we go through the need which led to the introduction of the 1947 Act by examining the *Explanatory Memorandum* of it, we will realise that the existing planning system was considered as static and too localised; there was no enforceable obligation on local authorities to prepare schemes and it had to a large extent a negative character (Cullingworth 1980, p. 464). Consequently, the main purposes for its legalisation could be summarised as follows (MLGP 1951, pp. 10–11):

- (a) To provide a framework, or pattern, of land use, against which day-to-day development could be considered; this was the “development plan”, which, as every local planning authority was obliged to draw up by 1 July 1951; the

latter plan was a more flexible successor to the pre-war “planning scheme,” and was wider in scope in that plan preparation was entrusted to the larger authorities, namely the county councils and county boroughs.

- (b) To bring all development under control by making it, with certain exceptions, subject to the permission of a local planning authority or of central government, given the fact that, at the same time, the existing 1,441 planning authorities in the country were reduced to only 145.
- (c) To deal with certain specific problems of amenity, such as the preservation of trees and woodlands, and the buildings of special architectural and historic interest, and the control of outdoor advertisements.
- (d) To solve the problem of compensation and betterment by:
 - (i) seeking to ensure that land was purchased at “existing use value”;
 - (ii) where land was developed, securing for the community the increase in its value attributable to the grant of planning permission by the imposition of a development charge;
 - (iii) entrusting the assessment and collection of the development charge to a Central Land Board (CLB) set up under the 1947 Act;
 - (iv) setting aside a fund of £ 300,000,000, out of which payments might be made to owners whose land was depreciated by the restrictions imposed by the 1947 Act. This fund was the estimated aggregate of the amounts claimed by landowners under a system of unification in the State of the development rights of the whole country’s land. It is to be clarified here that this land, though not enjoying planning permission, was deemed to enjoy an enhanced value because it was very close to existing development.
- (e) To extend both the powers of public authorities to acquire and develop land for planning purposes, and the scale and scope of grants from central funds to local authorities towards carrying out the acquisition and clearing of land.

The significance of the 1947 Act is also reflected to some degree in its extensive and comprehensive character. The 1947 Act consisted of 129 sections, organised in ten parts (I–X) (MTCP 1947).

In general terms, the 1947 Act was a radical planning measure and, though it had a relatively smooth passage through Parliament, it occasioned considerable controversy thereafter (MLGP 1951, p. 10). In this context, the other main parties in Parliament opposed the above planning policy by giving the following answers to a questionnaire specially prepared by A’J and issued to the three larger political parties to express their planning policy aspects (Editorial 1950b, p. 207).

The Conservative Party characterized the 1947 Act as nationalisation of land. It argued that the “development charge” under the new Act provided both a deterrent to development and a discouragement to land being made available. At the same time, the Liberals, though they agreed with the general object of Labour legislation, considered the following points as the main faults of the 1947 Act (Anonymous 1950, pp. 210–212):

- (a) The 1947 Act imposed a charge on those who developed their land, therefore discouraging all developments by private owners.
- (b) Compensation for losses of development value was faulty in principle, as being payment by the community for values created by the community and which should never have been in private hands.
- (c) The 1947 Act, which was too complicated, involved a great deal of delegated legislation.

Of more direct interest, however, was the professionals' reaction and especially that of the architectural circles as stated in the pages of *A'J*. Actually, three months before the 1947 Act came into force, it had been characterised as "extremely complex, but probably contains all that any pre-war planner could have wished". In addition, it had been noticed that the planning authorities had only three-months time in which they had to prepare their own machinery and they would suffer many disappointments if they thought that all they needed to do was to appoint a Planning Officer of the pre-war kind and provide him with a few assistants (Editorial 1948a, p. 299).

On the other hand, the regular commentator of *A'J*, Astragal,¹ referring to the development value of a plot of land, which under the 1947 Act had to be expropriated by the State, as the difference between its market value at the sale and the market value for existing use of the plot as agricultural land, pointed to the problems which would arise in the redevelopment of central urban areas. He wrote that if a man were to buy a block of twenty 4-floored buildings in a central area, demolish ten of them for open space, car parks, etc., and rebuild the other ten as 8-floored buildings, he would not have increased the floor space or cubic content of the block at all. Yet it appeared that the Board would be compelled to charge him a big development charge on the ten buildings that were changed from 4 floors to 8, and would not be able to allow him a "credit" for the vanished space in the ten demolished buildings. There might have been some way round this difficulty within the terms of the Act. If not the situation would be impossible, and so big a defect in one of the most complex Acts ever passed (Astragal 1948, p. 240).

It must be considered as a logical result of the created situation by the issue of the 1947 Act, that a great controversy started thanks to the general question of the development charge. It rapidly became clear that owners were reluctant to sell at existing use value and that buyers were prepared to purchase at higher prices. The description of the arisen phenomenon is characteristic reading the Editorial of *A'J*, dated 21st October 1948. Among other aspects, the following was pointed out there, that what was happening is equally plain: it was a landowners' strike, or more properly a landowners' lockout. Landowners had therefore decided, in the great majority of cases, not to sell unless they were paid a price equivalent to existing use

¹ The writer of Astragal column was Sir Hugh Casson from 1937 to 1939, continuously, from 1940 to 1944, occasionally, and from 1945 to 1951, continuously. The above information was provided by Sir Hugh Casson himself to the author in Athens on 5 October 1987 after a lecture at the National Technical University of Athens.

value *plus* development charge. Moreover, if one might continue to wait for the rebuilding of city centres and new towns, and of any goodwill for the Act to be retained, it was essential that land should be made available at something near existing use value for the small amount of private house building then being authorized (Editorial 1948b, p. 371).

In another *A'J* Editorial on 11 November 1948, it was argued that the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947, had imposed an additional burden on those whose profession was to deal with land in any way (Editorial 1948c, p. 437). In other words, the Act levied a charge on the work of the professions as well as on the value of land.

Furthermore, Alison Ravetz (1980, pp. 64–67) pointed out that the system devised in the 1940s was designed to control the use and value of land, and the mechanism was the one hundred per cent “betterment”² tax on development! From this point of view, Ravetz considered that in its effect the 100 % tax was a revolutionary measure amounting to land nationalisation. However, as the one hundred per cent charge had never had a chance to become fully operative, the case that it would kill all development, as it was argued at that time, was never proven.

Anyway, the criticism developed in the late 1940s which was directed against the 1947 Act, had focused on a key issue in that the Act threatened to defeat the principal aim of planning by discouraging desirable development. Meanwhile, the established procedure for securing planning permission, which was largely a product of the existing system of democratic local government in which decisions were taken not by officials, but by unpaid elected councilors who met at fixed intervals, was considered as extremely slow, and a further discouragement to development (MLGP 1951, pp. 12, 14).

The above difficulties prompted the production of memoranda criticising especially parts VI and VII of the 1947 Act, by a number of professional bodies and representative associations in 1949. Among the most influential were those of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, the Chartered Auctioneers’ and Estate Agents’ Institute, the Council of the Law Society, the Federation of British Industries, the Association of British Chambers of Commerce and the County Landowners’ Association. All these bodies suggested that the liability to development charge put a severe brake on development (MLGP 1951, pp. 12–13).

In particular, the Law Society, writing to the Minister Lewis Silkin on 12 May 1949, argued that the decision about the development charge should be one hundred per cent in all cases had fundamentally altered the situation and the Council had asked to inform the Minister that they fully supported the amendment which had been made to the Land Tribunal Bill in the House of Lords and which provided that any person aggrieved by the determination of a development charge by the Central Land Board under section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947, should

² By the term “betterment” was recognised that an increase in value of private property was due to the activities of society as a whole rather than the individual owner, who therefore could not be considered to have an exclusive right to it.

be enabled to appeal within 28 days to the Lands Tribunal (PRO file HLG 71/1499, 12 May 1949).

A little later, on 23 May 1949, the Federation of British Industries wrote to the same Minister, referring to the amendment made by the House of Lords to the Lands Tribunal Bill, giving the Tribunal to be set up under that Bill jurisdiction to hear and determine appeals against development charges levied under the 1947 Act, stating that they supported it entirely on the following grounds:

[...] When the Town and Country Planning Act 1947, was introduced the intention that development charges should be levied at a varying percentage at the discretion of the Central Land Board and no right of appeal was accorded. Subsequently, however, on the introduction of the Development Charge Regulations you yourself announced that there had been second thoughts in this matter and that development charges would be at the rate of 100 % of the development value. In other words, the amount of the development charge is now a pure question of valuation, which is always a matter of opinion. Admirably as the District Valuers may carry out their work it is obviously an unsatisfactory situation that one party to an argument of such a nature should have the power of decision without reference to an independent appeal tribunal [...].

Finally, in a paper submitted to the Minister, Lewis Silkin, by the Chartered Auctioneers' and Estate Agents' Institute on 9 June 1949, it was stated that their Council very much hoped that the Minister would introduce legislation to provide for a right of appeal to the Lands Tribunal from the determination of the Central Land Board in regard to development charges. It was thought that such a right of appeal would be of help, not only to valuers in private practice and those for whom they act, but also to the Central Land Board and the Valuation Office. If there were objections on grounds of procedure in including a provision of this kind in the Lands Tribunal Bill before Parliament, then their Council believed that the matter was important and urgent enough to justify the introduction of a short Bill to amend the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947.

Trying to explain the above objections, Cullingworth (1980, p. 45) reached the conclusion that two main categories of criticism had been developed for the 1947 Act: first, it was said that the land market was stagnant or that the Act was being frustrated because land was still passing at a price well above its existing use value and that the only cure was to reduce the charge; second, it was argued that no matter how fairly the charge was assessed, the public would never believe, unless there was a right of appeal, that they were being adequately protected against a monopoly.

As a result, a process of reconsideration of the consequences of the 1947 Act developed in governmental circles as well. A first indication of the above situation can be considered to be the statement of the Central Land Board in its first Annual Report in 1949, that "much building land has been taken off the market" (Editorial 1949b, p. 217); in other words, that a restriction on urban development was an effect of the 1947 Act. A second element supporting the above interpretation is that from December 1949 an Official Committee on Development Charges had been established. The Committee met a few times and before it could settle the differences among its members the election of February 1950 intervened. Following the

return of a Labour Government and the appointment of Hugh Dalton as Minister of Town and Country Planning, a new urgency was given to the publication of the Official Committee's report, which took place in May 1950. The report was lengthy and detailed but the main proposals were for a widening of the use classes (Cullingworth 1980, pp. 48–50). As a consequence, the changes brought about in 1950 were seen as modest, and did little to allay the general hostility towards the misunderstanding and suspicion of the development charge system.

Indeed, the pressure for a major amendment of the 1947 Act grew. In September 1950, a short Bill was introduced in Parliament by the Government to amend certain defective provisions of the 1947 Act, relating to planning control. This evolution was an outcome of the fact that the development charge, as a new measure, was especially unpopular. The criticism, in particular, of the professional associations was focused on the parts V, VI and VII of the 1947 Act; that is, on those dealing with compensation, payments for the acquisition of development rights, and development charges (Cullingworth 1980, pp. 51 and 54). In this context, the circulation of the second Annual Report of the Central Land Board in 1950, asserted that the failure of that part of the 1947 Act was a serious matter. It was not sufficient for a defender on the Act to say that it was being ignored or misused. The Act set up a new and arbitrary system designed to control a market which had previously been free (Editorial 1950d, p. 444).

In addition, there was acute awareness among officials of the difficulty of distribution of the £ 300,000,000, although nothing could be done until there was an estimate of the claims. Nevertheless, the decision to distribute the amount of £ 300,000,000 in 1953 was based on the assumption that land would be depreciated to its existing use value; this had not happened and, therefore, the decision to distribute that sum should be reconsidered (Cullingworth 1980, p. 49).

This was the situation till 5 October 1951, when Parliament was dissolved and, after the general election on 25 October 1951, the Conservatives were returned with an overall majority. Winston Churchill became again Prime Minister, whilst Harold Macmillan was appointed head of the newly renamed Ministry of Housing and Local Government on 30 October. As Cullingworth pointed out (1975, p. 255; 1980, p. 60) “the term “planning” was significantly being dropped”; moreover, he argues that the success of the 1947 “solution” was charily going to be short lived; in other words, planning was considered as a failure.

8.2 The Revision of the Planning System in 1950s by the Conservatives

The opposition to the foundation of the planning system introduced in 1940s, was born as an idea in wartime and established in legislative terms in the first post-war years. A prominent place has to be given to the Conservative Cabinet of the 1951–1959 period. Actually, in those 9 years a systematic attempt was undertaken

by the Conservative Administration to abolish the most significant points of the 1947 Act. Already from the general elections of 1950, the Conservatives had promised “drastic changes” to it (Cullingworth 1980, p. 49).

The Conservative policy on land development had been set out in its election manifesto in 1951, under the title *Britain Strong and Free* (Conservative manifesto 1951), stating that the sale of land for building houses and for development of all kinds had been hampered by the Socialist Town and Country Planning Act. This had brought the planning of land use into disrepute. Conservatives wanted to see that the land was used properly and that its beauties and amenities were preserved. Procedure for obtaining planning permission could be simplified and appeals might be heard by a properly constituted tribunal. The development charge had worked unfairly and had also impeded good development. The scheme for compensation gave inadequate sums to many who suffered genuine loss, but at the same time handed out taxpayers’ money to others who would lose nothing. Consequently, they proposed drastically alterations, to proceed on the principle that for certain classes of property there should be no development charge and no compensation. For others, there should be full compensation and a corresponding charge. There should also be a right of appeal against assessments (Cullingworth 1980, p. 85).

Obviously, the so-called “drastic overhaul” of the planning system promised in the above election manifesto could not be implemented instantly by the new Conservative Administration. Nevertheless, the day after Macmillan became minister, a long memorandum from officials was presented to him, as Cullingworth informed us (1980, p. 86) “whether we should amend parts V, VI and VII of the Act 1947”, which contained “the famous solution to the problem of compensation and betterment”. The question was whether the solution contained in parts V, VI and VII was the right one or, indeed, one that was “endurable”. Criticisms of the financial provisions of the 1947 Act had fallen into three broad groups. First, it was said that the system of payments from a fixed fund was unfair, and that all claims should be paid in full. Secondly, development charges (Watkins 1952, p. 392) were generally disliked, as many people considered them arbitrary; it was regarded as a tax on enterprise. Lastly, land for development was not changing hands freely at existing use value; this upset “one of the underlying assumptions of the Act” and, taken with development charge, inevitably increased the cost of development (Cullingworth 1980, pp. 89–90).

Further meetings of these officials with Macmillan led to the elaboration of two outline schemes: the limited compensation scheme and the total set-off one. Both of them were set out in a paper, which Macmillan submitted, together with the report of the Official Committee, to the Woolton Committee in March 1952. This was a ministerial paper on development charges and compensation. This Committee was chaired by Woolton, the Lord President of the Council (Cullingworth 1980, pp. 88 and 96–98).

The limited compensation scheme would: (i) return development value to private landowners, (ii) abolish development charge altogether, and (iii) compensate owners as and when planning restrictions were imposed. The alternative total set-off scheme would: (i) preserve the principle that development values vest in the State,

(ii) keep the liability to development charge alive, (iii) but where there was a claim on the £ 300 million, treat the development charge as balancing the claim, and (iv) allow the owner refused permission to develop, to receive the full value of this claim (plus interest).

In addition, a second report was prepared by officials in May 1952 (Cullingworth 1980, pp. 100 and 103–104). The Woolton Committee met to consider the report from officials on 26 May 1952. The discussion which followed was confused and, though it was generally agreed that development charge should be abolished, the only other agreement was to resume discussion at the next meeting on 29 May 1952. There was much activity between parliamentary counsel and officials of the Ministry and of the Treasury till the Town and Country Planning Act, 1953, was issued as a Bill. This latter Act abolished the development charge and denationalised rights (Cherry 1974, p. 153).

At the same time, the new planning Act repealed the compulsory purchase powers of the Central Land Board, and the question arose as to whether stronger local authority powers were needed to prevent landowners from “holding developers to ransom”. The Opposition reacted to this development by stating during the second reading that a Bill which provides no means for the recovery by the community of socially-created land values, endangers the effective powers of local planning authorities to check undesirable development and, by depriving the Central Land Board of the power of compulsory purchase, exposes the developer to extortionate charges (Cullingworth 1980, pp. 137–138 and 140).

Despite the above objections, the Conservative Government proceeded to pass into law the Town and Country Planning Act, 1954, hereafter cited as “the 1954 Act”. Its publication completed the abolition of the 1947 Act and the planning system, which had been created. The 1954 Act received the Royal Assent on 25 November, 1954, and it came into force for all purposes on 1 January 1955. It was concerned almost entirely with the financial aspects of land planning and hardly touched at all what had been termed the planning provisions proper of the 1947 Act. In effect, it provided a new system of compensation for: (i) planning restrictions on the development of land, and (ii) the compulsory purchase of land by local and other public authorities (Heap 1955, p. 30).

The 1954 Act was divided into 6 parts and contained 72 sections and 8 schedules. A short presentation of its main provisions is as follows.

Part I dealt with those cases in which as immediate payment from the £ 300 million, compensation fund could be claimed; that is, with those cases where a claim on the fund had been made and the claim could be said to have matured (Watkins 1954, p. 408). This part was considered as the most complicated of the 1954 Act (Heap 1955, p. 31).

Part II dealt with transactions in the future, cases where a compensation claim arose on a refusal, or on a conditional grant of planning permission, and where existed in respect of that land an admitted claim on the compensation fund that had not been wholly discharged by a cash payment under part I (Watkins 1954, p. 408).

Part III and IV dealt with the basis of compensation where there was no possible claim on the fund; especially, part III in the case where land was compulsorily

acquired outright, whilst part IV where planning permission was revoked or modified, to the detriment of the use of the land by its owner (Watkins 1954, p. 408).

Part V dealt with compensation to be paid by the Minister of Housing and Local Government for past planning decisions, already given before the commencement of the 1954 Act, whereby land had been depreciated in value by reason of planning permission for its development having been refused or granted subject to onerous conditions (Heap 1955, p. 33).

Finally, part VI contained some important provisions of a miscellaneous nature (Watkins 1954, p. 407).

Interpretations of the new procedures differed. Ernest Watkins³ in his analysis of the 1954 Act, when it was still a Bill, argued (1954, p. 407) that it was supplementary to the 1947 Act. This, because it kept intact the legal mechanism for the control of the development of land laid down by the 1947 Act, and because it still based its compensation plans very largely on the £ 300.000.000 compensation fund set up by the 1947 Act. However, the Act faced criticism regarding its influence on the previous planning system. Thus, Desmond Heap, who was the Comptroller and City Solicitor to the Corporation of the City of London since 1947 and President of the Town Planning Institute for the period 1955–1956 (Anonymous 1955, p. 2), argued that as parts VI and VII of the 1947 Act were complementary, so equally were the two planning Acts of 1953 and 1954. He explained the above thesis as follows: as part VI of the 1947 Act dealt with the compensation side of land control and part VII with the betterment side of the problem, so the 1953 Act by abolishing development charges and by replacing VII of the 1947 Act resolved the betterment side of the “compensation and betterment” question, while the 1954 Act by replacing VI of the 1947 Act in fact was dealing with the compensation side of the problem (Heap 1955, p. 30).

Many years later, Gordon Cherry noted (1974, p. 153) that the situation produced by the 1954 Act was complex and anomalous. There was after its establishment in fact a dual market in land; while, private sales were at current market prices, compensation for certain planning restrictions and for compulsory purchase was to be paid on the basis of the existing use plus any admitted 1947 development value. Second, Cullingworth noted (1980, p. 167) that no changes in the powers of compulsory acquisition were made by the 1954 Act, though consideration was given to the possibility. At the same time, other related issues, such as those concerning the designation of land for compulsory purchases and the powers of government departments to acquire land came under review. Cullingworth’s observation was derived from the debate developed in the House of Commons, when the 1954 Act was introduced as a Bill. The strong controversy generated by the Opposition was based on the ground that it failed “to safeguard the public interest in land values created by community endeavour”. It was developed in Ungood Thomas’s argument who, as a member of the Opposition, said that the

³ Ernest Watkins was a frequent writer of legislative articles in *A’J*.

two-tier system as (Macmillan) implied, was fundamental to his Bill. What the landowner got for his land would depend entirely on the chance of who happened to be the purchaser, whether it happened to be the local authority or a private individual. This, he supported, was an extraordinary price structure to set up. He could not see how a price structure of that kind could possibly survive. If this two-tier system of prices broke down, the whole of the Minister's Bill would break down too (Heap 1959, pp. 33–35; Cullingworth 1980, pp. 176–177).

The above planning disadvantage was faced by the introduction of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1959, which came into force on 16 August 1959. This Act restored the 1939 market value principle with respect to compensation payable on the compulsory purchase of land. But, as Desmond Heap argues, to this general provision there were five statutory modifications, not all of which were new, some of them being based on what had hitherto been customary. The first and most important modification of the market value principle secured that an acquiring authority should not pay any increase in the value of the acquired land if the increase might be said to have been brought about by the scheme of development, which gave rise to the need for the compulsory purchase. The second one secured that if on a compulsory purchase of land the scheme of development caused an increase in value of other “contiguous or adjacent” land belonging to the same owner, such an increase should be set off against the price paid for the land compulsorily acquired. The third modification operated in favour of the vendor whose land had been taken compulsorily and ensured that any diminution in the value of the land caused by the threat of compulsory purchase should be ignored. The fourth modification was entirely novel and would be helpful to the vendor whose property was acquired compulsorily; the 1959 Act provided that if, within 5 years of the completion of the compulsory purchase, the acquired land came to be used for a more remunerative purpose than was thought possible under planning control at the date of purchase, then the vendor could reopen the formerly completed sale of the land and claim additional compensation from the acquiring authority. Finally, the fifth modification made general what was already lawful under certain Acts, namely, the payment, on any compulsory purchase of land to which the 1959 Act applied, of discretionary allowances to cover costs of removal and trade losses (Heap 1960, pp. 43–44).

The 1959 Act met strong criticism as well. George Pepler, reviewing the book of TJ Nardecchia and David Sullivan, under the title *The Town and Country Planning Act, 1959* in *The Journal of the Town Planning Institute*, wrote (1960, p. 178) that:

[...] “if Acts of Parliament had coats of arms, the Town and Country Planning, Act, 1959, could proudly display a bend sinister”. So write the authors of this book in their Introduction to Part I of the Act. I'm not sure that “proudly” is the right word, for a bend sinister is well known as an heraldic mark of illegitimacy. However, this mark certainly fits the case of an Act that by its parentage and purpose has no business to be masquerading under the name of Town and Country Planning [...].

To sum up, since the establishment of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning—later renamed, by the Labour Cabinet, Ministry of Local Government and Planning and, by the Conservative one, Ministry of Local Government and Housing—six Town and Country Planning Acts had been produced. These were the Minister of Town and Country Planning Act, 1943, and the Town and Country Planning Acts of 1944, 1947, 1951, 1954 and 1959.

However, as Heap pointed out (1960, p. 43), the principal Act remained the 1947 Act, parts I–IV, which dealt with the making and amendment of development plans, the day-to-day control of development through the grant or refusal of planning permission for development, and the acquisition and disposal of land for planning purposes, were in force during the whole of the 1950s.

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Part III

Replanning London

Chapter 9

The Central Government Policy for Re-planning London

Abstract The role of the Central Government regarding the planning of London in the interwar period and the initial stage of the war is examined. The Central Government policy was focussed very early on the re-planning of London issue. In this chapter, the contribution of Lord Reith, the Minister of Works and Buildings, are highlighted. It is to be noted, that Lord Reith, with the concurrence of the Minister of Health, asked the LCC and City Corporation to begin provisional plans for the redevelopment of their bombed areas. This was the starting point of the reconstruction and re-planning procedure of London.

As it has become clear from the previous analysis, the need to re-plan London was already acute by the first years of the twentieth century. However, together with the other problems which obstructed any attempt at comprehensive planning, the fact that there were over one hundred planning authorities by 1919 in the Greater London Region made it more difficult. As a consequence, the Central Government policy was focussed very early on the re-planning of London issue (Fig. 9.1).

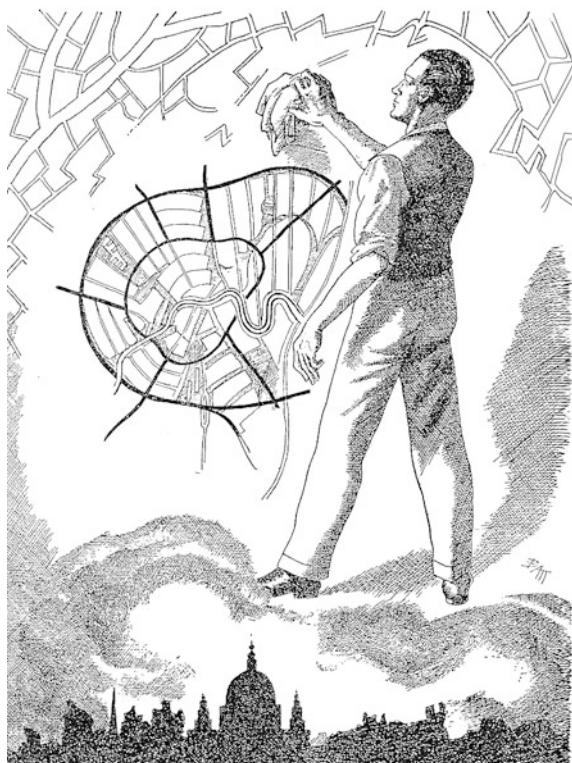
Soon after the Housing and Town Planning Act of 1919 made joint planning possible, groups of authorities in the Home Counties formed Joint Planning Committees and prepared advisory plans and reports (PRO file HLG 71/116, “Historical Note...”). Later, Neville Chamberlain, as Minister of Health¹ from 1924 to 1929 called all the authorities in conference and induced them to form an Advisory Joint Town Planning Committee (AJTPC) for Greater London, roughly the area within a radius of 25 miles from Charring Cross. The AJTPC appointed Sir Raymond Unwin, the famous architect who had recently retired from the Ministry of Health, as their technical adviser and in the course of a few years produced two reports in rather general terms.

As Gordon Cherry argued (1974, pp. 90–91), Unwin worked energetically and the first Report of the Greater London Committee was issued in 1929. This dealt particularly with the question of open spaces and a green belt, and with ribbon development on main roads. He estimated that at least 62 square miles of additional playing fields and 142 square miles of additional other or general open space were

¹ It was a post which then comprised not only health but also the functions later discharged to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (Blake 1972, p. 228).

Fig. 9.1 A drawing by Batt JM Dent and Sons Ltd., showing a planner designing the new plan of London.

Source Purdom, CB, *How should we rebuild London?*, London, 1946, 174



required. Two Interim Reports followed, one on open space in which Unwin pointed out the rate at which the existing spaces were being used up, and one on decentralisation. He recommended self-contained satellite communities at distances of up to 12 miles, and still more complete industrial garden cities located between 12 and 25 miles from Charring Cross. However, the 1931–1932 government economics led to the expenses of the Committee being curtailed. The next Report of the Committee, under the title *Second Report of the Greater London Regional Plan Committee*, was published; it was 1933. In it, a narrow green girdle around London was suggested (Cherry 1974, p. 101), as well as a proposal for 71 new or improved roads (Thomson 1969, p. 98). But again, as Cherry pointed out (1974, p. 91), the limitations on the financial resources had effectively terminated the enterprise.

In the hope of getting something more definite, the Minister of Health induced the authorities to reconstitute the AJTPC on more positive lines and Major Hardy Syms was appointed Chief Technical Officer. It was set up under Sect. 3 of the 1932 Act, and in 1935 the London County Council (LCC) decided to contribute £ 2,000,000 during the next 3 years to the formation of a green belt around Greater

London. As George Pepler² argues, it happened because the AJTPC was more positive and the LCC found it a nuisance. Although, the Green Belt idea had been recommended by the original Committee, the LCC wished the idea to be considered an original one of their own and dealt with the Home Counties severally and not through the Joint Committee (PRO file HLG 71/116, "Historical Note..."). This LCC opposition brought the operations of the Joint Committee to a standstill and to save the situation the Minister of Health called the authorities together again and induced them in 1937 to substitute for the Joint Committee a Standing Conference on London Regional Planning (PRO file HLG 71/116, "Note of an..."), a body to be available to consider any planning problems that might be referred to it. EC Culpin, ex-Chairman of LCC, was elected Chairman of the Conference, but as Pepler relates, the LCC had shown no enthusiasm for this development.

One good thing the Conference did was to appoint a Technical Committee comprising the Planning Officers or Engineers of the Counties, County Boroughs and City, plus selected technical representatives of the Boroughs, Urban and Rural Districts, each *en bloc*. The Committee prepared a broad surface utilisation map for the whole region and obtained a very interesting report from the London Passenger Transport Board. However, the war brought work to a standstill. The Conference last met on 28 April 1939.

Following the severe bomb damage suffered by the City and County of London, early in March 1941 Lord Reith, the Minister of Works and Buildings, with the concurrence of the Minister of Health, asked the LCC and City Corporation to begin provisional plans for the redevelopment of their bombed areas. Lord Portal, the Successor of Lord Reith, trying to express the need for rebuilding the central urban districts, in a letter sent to EC Culpin on April 1942, argued that Lord Reith took the view, with which he agreed, that in planning the reconstruction of the London region a beginning should be made within the central areas, particularly in view of the fact that enemy bombing had been largely concentrated on the centre (PRO file HLG 85/34).

In fact, Reith had asked the two authorities to cooperate and had intimated that when they could give a sufficient indication of their schemes, arrangements might be made for the extension of planning over the outer areas. As a response, the LCC instructed JH Forshaw, their Architect and Planning Officer, to prepare provisional plans, and appointed Professor Patrick Abercrombie as Consultant. Abercrombie made clear to the LCC at the beginning that he would have to take within his purview a wider area than the County. Meanwhile, the City instructed their Surveyor, FJ Forty, to prepare their plan (PRO file HLG 71/116, "London and...").

It also emerges from a PRO document in the above file, written by George Pepler, that the Clerks to the Home Counties were alarmed in October 1941, just after they had heard that the City and LCC plans were well advanced and after the

² George Pepler was Chief Technical Officer responsible for Town and Country Planning at the Ministry and had great influence in planning matters amongst the local authorities (Potter 1959, pp. 154–155).

statement of Lewis Silkin, who was Chairman of the LCC Planning Committee at that time, that planning could not stop at the County boundary. The Counties feared that they might have a plan sprung on them which affected their interests but had been prepared without any consultation with them. CW Radcliffe, who was Clerk to the Middlesex County Council, together with the other County Clerks, wrote on 29 October 1941 to Lord Reith saying that he felt most strongly that the Home Counties and County Boroughs should take a constructive part in the planning of their areas and suggesting that they should form a Committee to confer with Professor Abercrombie and the City Corporation in the preparation of redevelopment plans affecting areas outside London. Sir Geoffrey Whiskard³ then wrote to Sir John Maude, Secretary in the Ministry of Health, sending him a copy of Radcliffe's letter and asking him to agree that Lord Reith should call an informal meeting of representatives of the Home Counties and County Boroughs to discuss the matter. Sir John Maude replied to say that he agreed but suggested that it would be preferable, if practicable, to postpone the meeting until after the formal announcement that the planning powers of the Ministry of Health were to be transferred to Lord Reith. The urgency of the matter was that the LCC plans were nearing completion and the Home Counties were afraid of being faced with a *fait accompli* or of indiscreet utterances from members of the LCC.

The informal conference was held on 2 January 1942 (PRO file HLG 71/116, "Note of an..."). As at that date no announcement had been made about transfer of powers, Lord Reith steered the conference so that the request to appoint Professor Abercrombie might come from the representatives. He also explained that at the outset he had directed his attention to coordinated action in the City and the LCC areas, these being central areas and those of major damage. On the other hand, representatives referred to the unwieldy size of the Standing Conference and the more simple machinery of their proposed Committee, which would be democratic in character; they agreed that the planning should be done by a "mastermind", such as Professor P Abercrombie.

Finally, the conference expressed the following opinions:

- (a) Lord Reith should instruct Professor Abercrombie to prepare an outline plan, covering such an area of London and the Home Counties as Professor Abercrombie thought appropriate;
- (b) that provisions should be made for Professor Abercrombie to work in collaboration with the Technical Committee of the Standing Conference on London Regional Planning.

Informal negotiations then took place with LCC officials who needed some persuading that it was necessary to make use of the Standing Conference. Furthermore, Lord Reith invited representatives of the City and the LCC to meet him

³ Sir Geoffrey Whiskard at the time of his appointment in 1941 as Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Works had just completed his five-year term of office as British High Commissioner in Australia (Anonymous 1942, p. 272).

informally and obtained Treasury approval for the Ministry to spend up to five thousands sterling on Professor Abercrombie's fee and technical expenses (PRO file HLG 71/116, "London and...").

Summing up, it could be concluded that at this initial stage of the war, the central government had decided to play a narrow role in the re-planning of London, as the basic responsibility on this matter had been transferred gradually to the LCC for the most part. Actually, the planning position of London at that time was as follows: the City and the LCC had, at the request of Lord Reith, been involved in the procedure of producing provisional outline plans, while regarding Greater London, the boundary of the area had been agreed and Professor Abercrombie was on the way to preparing an outline plan that was to link up appropriately with the LCC plan (PRO file HLG 71/117, "London, letter sent by...").

At this point, the following question is arisen: what were the main objectives of such a re-planning of London? The basic problems faced by the British metropolis at that time, as we already saw, could be summarised by the following four crucial issues:

- (a) the need to check the drift of industrial population to London;
- (b) to halt its further physical growth;
- (c) to re-plan the urban areas to give better environments;
- (d) to decentralise employment and people.

It becomes obvious that the decentralisation of industry from London would become the main question to which the planners were called to give a solution. Moreover, the problem of industry had to be considered on the one hand from the point of view of type, and on the other of quantity. But, how were these dimensions of the problem specified, and which way were they faced by the Central Government officials?

Referring to which kind of industry should be decentralised, it had been argued that some industries could best be carried on very near the places where consumers lived (PRO file HLG 71/118: "The Decentralisation...", pp. 1-3). Examples were the distributive trades, domestic labour, bakeries, builders, maintenance and supply services. The employment provided in such industries was considered to be largely a function of the size of the population and of the prevailing standard of living. On the other hand, there were industries whose location bore no relation to the distribution of population. In London such industries fell mainly under the following headings:

- i. Those highly concentrated industries whose efficiency depended on a central market or on close personal contact between their component firms.
- ii. Industries depending on fashion or where products and services were sold by individual contact through relatively few central channels.
- iii. Industries consisting of a collection of highly specialised firms linked to each other through the necessity for very frequent trade relations.
- iv. Heavy industries using much power and where the cost of plant and machinery formed an important part of the cost of the final product.

Referring to the amount of industry to be decentralised, it was dependent upon the population which it was necessary to move far from London, and especially from its central area. For this reason, an attempt was made to suggest the methods by which the relationship between industry and population could be established more precisely, letting the density of population determine the density of industry, rather than vice versa (*PRO file HLG 71/118*: “The Decentralisation...”, p. 6). Therefore, it was considered necessary first to determine how many people were to be decanted to reduce the average population density in each subregion of London to the target density. For this purpose, it was seen as essential to base actions on recent figures and not to make estimates on pre-war information. Adjustments in the light of current changes would necessarily be much smaller and more certain than if 1938 conditions were allowed to determine the plan.

Having determined the areas whose density was to be reduced, the first step should be to ensure that factories decentralised or defunct were not immediately replaced by new factories or immigrants; to this end, it would help if authoritative announcements were made, as soon as areas were determined, that it was the Government’s intention to decentralise population and industry from them. It was considered that such announcements would have a considerable psychological effect and would discourage employers intending to set up business there. The next step was to be the determination of what proportion the employed population bore to the resident population in the selected overcrowded areas. It was expected that this proportion would differ from district to district and that its composition by age, sex and occupation would also vary; in short, that certain districts had become “unbalanced” in the employment they provided.

Finally, having obtained the population to be decanted it would next be necessary to translate it into individual places of employment; a large proportion of these would belong to the residentiary industries. Certainly, it would be extremely difficult to achieve a fine adjustment between places of work and places of residence of the populations to be decentralised. Some adjustments could be made through extension or curtailment of the area over which employed persons travelled to their work. Also, the quota of firms necessary to provide employment for the decanted population could probably be found in all cases within the subregional areas whose population was to be dispersed. In order to facilitate the above procedure, it was considered that a start could be made with industrial decentralisation by interviewing those firms among the Board of Trade’s applicants for removal, which were destroyed or damaged during the war and which sought new premises. The majority of them had asked for sites in Central London, but something like one-third was considered possibly suitable for decentralisation beyond the planned green belt of London (Table 9.1). For the most part these firms had premises in inner London before the war and their removal would, therefore, contribute to decongestion (*PRO file HLG 71/118*: “The Decentralisation...”, pp. 6–8). It was, of course, recognised that these firms would provide only a small proportion of the amount of decentralisation required and resort would have to be made to the method outlined above.

Table 9.1 Sample list of firms whose premises had been destroyed or damaged by enemy action and who were prepared to move to an outlying district

Code type of Industry (1)	Labour (2)	Locality (3)
Manufactures of motor cars	200	50 miles radius NW London
Paper food containers	37	20/50 miles radius South of Thames
Gear manufacture	325	30 miles radius South of Thames
Plastic component manufactures	100	Dunstable-Luton-Harpenden-Welwyn
Manufacturers building materials	100	30 miles radius of London
Paper manufacturers	215	50 miles radius of London
Tool manufacturers	67	40 miles radius of London
Remilling soap chips to soap flakes	510	20/30 miles radius of London
Clothing manufacturers	314	50 miles radius of London
Agricultural machinery manufacturers	200	30 miles radius of London
Clothing manufacturers	100	30 miles radius N of London
Clothing manufacturers	100	30 miles radius N of London
Woodworking	980	Home Counties
Cellulose films	16	50 miles radius London
Seeds, flowers	98	Southern Counties-Kent Surrey-Sussex
Hydraulic engineers	335	30/50 miles N of London
Sacks-Bags-Hop pockets manufacturers	54	Mid Kent or East Kent
Household electric washing machines	155	Willing to go anywhere
Tool manufacturers	150	30 miles radius to London
Builders Joinery Manufacturers	76	Kent to Surrey – 15 miles radius
Biological products manufacturers	120	25 miles radius of London
Electrical Engineers	131	50/70 miles radius of London
Bookbinding	150	40 miles radius of London
Electrical Equipment Manufacturers	393	Home Counties
Jam making—Fruit preserving	150	Rent essential
Manufacturing woodworkers	220	50 miles radius of London
TOTAL	5,296	

Source PRO file HLG 71/119, “Greater London Plan Policy, Cabinet paper 1946”

The above proposals could easily be considered as a product of the influence of the recommendations contained in the Barlow Report. But, at this initial stage of the war the position regarding the planning of London was not very satisfactory, as SLG Beaufoy of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning pointed out in early 1943 (PRO file HLG 71/117, “The Planning of London, paper...”).

However, besides the lack of officially executed plans for London in that period, other bodies had devoted time, energies and money to the task of presenting their own ideas on the re-planning of London. Their value lies in the fact that they presented a variety of ideas, which were known only in town planning circles and which, by obtaining publicity, refreshed the whole attempt to re-plan London. The examination of these plans will be the task of Chap. 10.

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Chapter 10

The Independent Plans for London

Abstract Besides the lack of officially executed plans for London in the first half of the twentieth century, various bodies had devoted time, energies and money to the task of presenting their own ideas on the re-planning of London. The examination of these plans will be the task of this chapter. Their value lies in the fact that they presented a variety of ideas, which were known only in town planning circles and which, by obtaining publicity, refreshed the whole attempt to re-plan London. Particularly, the submitted plans during the 1940s prepared by three independent bodies by the Modern Architects' Research Society (MARS), the Royal Academy (RA) and the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA)—especially the London Regional Reconstruction Committee (LRRC)—are presented in this chapter.

Despite wartime disturbance and restrictions, three independent bodies published for London and its region during the Second World War. The preparation of the independent plans, and the debates which they engendered, help to set London planning policy in a broad perspective. They also suggest that planning options in the capital and its region were more constrained than myth would suggest.

The years 1942–1950 saw the publication of a spate of advisory urban and regional plans in Britain. Prompted by the swelling debate on urban and national reconstruction from 1941, they continued to appear after the war and did not dwindle until after the introduction of universal, statutory town and country planning under the 1947 Act (Abercrombie 1945b; Sharp 1946; Adshead et al. 1948; Sharp 1949).

This wave of advisory planning recalled the early years of city planning in the United States, when Burnham, Ederstadt and many more professionals, most of them architects by training, produced dozens of advisory plans (Sutcliffe 1981, Chap. 4). In Britain, the situation in the later years of the war was very similar to the US precedent. In some towns and cities, bomb damage was the main stimulus to planning thought, but it was backed by a much broader determination among professionals and the public to ensure that urban planning was extended and reinforced after the war, in order to produce much higher urban standards than had been achieved before the war. Advisory local plans were seen as one way of contributing to the debate and educating the public (Marmaras and Sutcliffe 1994, p. 432).

London generated five advisory plans during the war years (Marmaras 1992). Two of these were official plans: the London County Council (LCC) Plan of 1943 and the Greater London Plan of 1944 (Forshaw and Abercrombie 1943; Abercrombie 1945a). The other three were independent ones. The two official plans have rightly secured the main attention of historians (see Chap. 11). In this Chapter, we shall be concerned solely with the three independent plans.

With three independent plans, London far outstripped all the other European belligerent cities between 1939 and 1945; in Germany, for example, reconstruction planning was highly centralised and no voluntary plans appear to have been drawn up (Diefendorf 1993, pp. 158–180). The British plans were all the product of the early years of the war. Quickly produced and well publicised, they were the main focus of the London planning debate in 1942 and early 1943. Thereafter, however, the two official plans became the main centre of interest.

The initiative for all three plans came from the architects of London and its region. This bias reflected the leading role of architects in British town planning between the wars, and the lack of employment for architects during the war. Among the best known were Barry Parker, who was the consultant planner for Wythenshawe, and Louis de Soissons, who prepared the plan for Welwyn Garden City. Eager to take part in the wartime planning debate, they had the vision and energy to prepare entire plans for London. The other professions involved with planning, the surveyors and the municipal engineers, were more fully employed during the war on day-to-day matters.¹

The three London independent plans were at first sight very different from one another. The Modern Architects' Research Society (MARS) plan of 1942 was typical of the many CIAM (Congrès Internationaux des Architectes Modernes) promotional initiatives throughout the world after 1933. These were intended to promote its version of rational, scientific planning and architecture. The normal CIAM practice was to encourage its local or national branches to hold an exhibition, accompanied by publications, to show how. Modern Movement principles—as embodied in the Athens Charter of 1933—might be applied to a locality. The MARS group, as the British branch of CIAM, had already held an exhibition in London in 1938, stressing individual buildings and city problems, and in 1942 it went on to a further stage in this process.

The Royal Academy plan, also announced in 1942, and also at an exhibition, concentrated on developing the architectural remit of the Bressey inquiry. It simplified the Bressey road scheme and proposed a number of architectural treatments in a grandiose, classical style for some of the major intersections.

Finally, the RIBA (London Regional Reconstruction Committee—LRRC) plan, the main part of which was published as a report in 1943, was the closest of the three to a comprehensive plan for the London region. However, it dealt mainly with

¹ Architects had been prominent, for similar reasons, in the First World War. The London Society, formed in 1912 to contribute to the debate on the urban planning of London with the aid of architects who were out of work. The survey paid close attention to roads and local industry. The work was not completed for the whole of London, but the results were put on a map (Aston 1921).

communications and the planning of mixed, industrial and residential areas was discussed in a sketchy and incomplete way.

10.1 The Modern Architects' Research Society Plan

The Modern Architectural Research (MARS) Group was founded in 1933 by a team of British modernists to promote the architecture of the Modern Movement in Britain (Gold 1993, pp. 10, 357–376). It was, in fact, the British section of CIAM (Korn and Samuely 1942, pp. 143–151) and, as JR Gold argues, it “always had close links with the wider Modern Movement and a deep interest in town planning” (Hardy 2005, p. 39). Its Town Planning Committee,² set up in late 1937, but it was ready in its final form at the outset of the war, that is in 1939 (Johnson-Marshall 1966, p. 177). The plan had been virtually ready when war broke out in 1939 (Cherry 1988, p. 112). In fact, panels representing MARS ideas³ on London planning, including a linear layout, were displayed at the MARS “New Architecture” exhibition in London in 1938.

In the early years of the war, MARS was weakened and disrupted by military service and distant postings, but when the Minister of Works (Lord Reith) asked the LCC and the City of London to prepare reconstruction plans in March 1941, MARS began to renew its interest in London planning. As many of its members were young architects, they were especially liable to military service, but efforts were made to stay in touch with them by mail. As mentioned in *A'J*, Mr. Ralph Tubbs held the fort and kept the MARS group alive by maintaining contact between 90 members flung by the war into the most unexpected places. Amongst those withdrawn from circulation for the duration were Brett, Gunnery Instructor; Nicholson, Royal Navy; Fry, Major RE; Samuel, Captain, RE; Gropius, Harvard Professor; Moholy Nagi, Head of the Bauhaus, USA; Tatton Brown, Officer Cadet (Anonymous 1942a, p. 240).

The MARS “master plan” for London was published in the form of an exhibition in 1942. It complemented and developed the proposals of 1938. No formal report was ever published, but a “description and analysis” by Korn and Samuely (1942, pp. 143–151), the chairman of the subcommittee on transport and economics, appeared in June 1942 in the *Architectural Review*. This was a major statement of some ten thousand words, backed by diagrams presumably drawn from the exhibition panels.

The plan had a very good press which lives on the historical assessments of today (Johnson-Marshall 1966, p. 177). It was generally seen at the time as a piece of radical thinking by young architects of the Modern Movement which, though

² The committee membership was very distinguished, including Holford, Sharp, Ralph Tubbs, Maxwell Fry and Gibbert, the head of the Architectural Association (AA) School of Architecture (Anonymous 1942a, p. 240). The chairman was Arthur Korn.

³ The influence of the MARS Group was also spreading overseas. In addition to the Australian MARS, ARGIT (The Architectural Research Group in Toronto) had been set up in Canada and an organisation called TECNE had appeared at that period in Argentina (Anonymous 1942a, p. 240).

clearly not practical, presented an ideal vision of London as it might be if a completely fresh start could be made using all the potential of the “Machine Age”. Modern architecture might have struggled in the 1930s against neoclassicism, art déco, moderne and other styles, but during the war it secured growing support among architects, clients and the public. The Modern Movement concepts and forms of the MARS plan shocked few commentators in 1942.

However, the powerful statement by Korn and Samuely virtually ignored urban design and architecture. It was more of a theoretical model, recalling the Athens Charter itself. The Charter had not, even so, concentrated on communications to a similar degree. This emphasis on communications was the dominant feature of the MARS plan. Viewed in isolation, it might perhaps be seen as a CIAM quirk, but, as we shall see, it was a feature of all the independent plans.

The statement by Korn and Samuely saw London almost entirely in terms of movement and distribution. London was presented primarily as a centre of exchange and communications. With its regional and world role based on strategic transport routes, internal distribution in such a large city also required high-speed, high-capacity arteries. The River Thames determined the route of a single, east-west axis grouping transit, heavy industry, and metropolitan services. This radical, not to say daring, solution—a rationalisation of the Port of London, the City, West End, and the Great West Road—drove the MARS Group planners on to apply their linear principle to the creation of smaller axes running North and South from the main axis. Their main example seems to have been the Lee Valley, which they used as the basis for their Borough, District and neighbourhood unit sample layouts.

With this “double-sided comb” layout in place, Korn and Samuely let it determine almost all the rest of their London proposals. Their land use planning was perfunctory, even in respect of residential areas and open space, which like good CIAM members they hailed as a crucial importance for human well-being. The structure of the 16 linear strip-cities (Districts) which were to house the bulk of the population was determined by the communication spines. The Boroughs which combined to form each District, and which were planned to house a population of fifty thousands, secured one sketchy layout plan and hardly any textual treatment at all. Of course, the exhibition may have dealt more fully with non-transport matters than did the summary by Korn and Samuely.⁴

The principle of linearity in the MARS plan is very significant nonetheless. It linked London’s Modern Movement architects to Soria y Mata, through Miliutin

⁴ Johnson-Marshall (1966, p. 48–50), who was a contemporary of these events, presents a different picture. The MARS plan, according to him, dates from 1939. His selection of plans, which are much more clearly reproduced than those of Korn and Samuely, includes a layout for one of the neighbourhood units which are intended to make up the Boroughs. The concept is visibly a modified Radiant City superblock, with what looks like an awkward attempt to retain the zig-zag nature of Le Corbusier’s early *redents* by using south-oriented slab blocks with stubby, North-South wings. There is no hint of mixed development in these layouts, which again suggests a pure CIAM influence, given that missed development was common currency in the national planning debate by 1942.

and other Soviet planners of the 1920s, to Le Corbusier and CIAM in the 1930s. Le Corbusier's increasingly urgent development of the linear principle between Radiant City of 1930 and his wartime essays in regional planning had a powerful effect on his close followers. The MARS plan can be seen as a strongly Corbusian statement. This helps explain why the sketchy Borough layout appears to owe its only quality to its hints of late-1930s *unités d'habitation* within a Radiant City frame. In fact, Le Corbusier alone was acknowledged as precedent at the end of the statement by Korn and Samuely (1942, p. 150), though they expressed general gratitude to a host of unnamed predecessors.

In theory, linear development is the most efficient urban form, though in practice it has never worked well on a city-wide scale. Its application to an existing city of concentric form is virtually impossible. Seen as a whole, therefore, the MARS plan looks like a theoretical, "scientific" exercise by a group of transport economists and engineers rather than an expression of the interests of the whole of the MARS Group. As we shall see, however, preoccupation with transport was not usual at this time.

It would be unfair to imply the MARS proposals were merely doctrinaire. They stressed the importance of scientific analysis and statistically they were very impressive. The MARS proposals were based on an estimated population of 8,655,000 people and a calculated area for Greater London of 443,450 acres. A total of 115,500 acres were required for residential use, producing a net residential density of 75 inhabitants per acre overall. Industrial land totaled 20,480 acres and 3,840 acres were set aside for administration, shopping and other social needs. The remaining area of 303,630 acres, or 68.4 % of the total, was allocated to serve the leisure needs of the population. Much of this open space was located in strips between the linear Districts, penetrating as far as the East–West communication axis.

The main developed area of London took the form of the 16 linear Districts. Each was a veritable linear city about 2 miles wide and 8 miles long, housing 600,000 inhabitants arranged along a traffic artery running North to South. These Districts were linked together by the main traffic artery running from East to West and serving two big trading estates where the shopping and administrative functions for the whole region were concentrated as well as the vast majority of the heavy industry, while certain parts of the latter were located near the goods ring-roads, i.e. on the outside of the traffic artery. The City and the West End lay on the artery and retained their current functions.

At this point, it is interesting to pursue the criticism which was developed just after the publication of the MARS plan in the pages of *The Architect's Journal*. It related to both, the functionalism of the suggested transport system and the aesthetics of the proposed urban character. Regarding the first question, the Editorial (1942a, pp. 19–20) pointed out on 9 July 1942 that to provide public transport facilities for passengers travelling from East to West along one route only, as the

East-West roads provided by the plan were for private cars only, in a city the size of London, “is to exaggerate the truth of the saying that the longest way round is the shortest way home”. Furthermore, the plan appeared to overlook the desirability of planning to avoid peak traffic and the Editorial argued that linear development, by providing for a tremendous increase in speed, would make it possible to handle large volumes of traffic very much more efficiently than it was possible to do at present.

Moreover, these aspects of the disadvantages of the proposed transport system for London became the basis for developing the criticism of the MARS plan in aesthetic terms. The argument here was that although the plan was really no more than a diagram illustrating certain principles on which the design of a transport system might be based, it was called a plan for London and alarm was expressed that (Editorial 1942a, p. 20):

[...] in the interests of simplicity almost every feature that made London recognisable had been wiped out [...].

The most aggressive criticism of the aesthetic implications of the MARS plan came from Lionel Brett of the Royal Academy. He supported the view that London had character and, despite its elephantiasis, it also had a certain unity. He, afraid that the MARS plan would destroy London’s aesthetics, argued that the character of London in the field of aesthetics should be rescued and re-emphasised.

Samuely (1942, pp. 54–55), one of the authors of the description of the MARS plan that appeared in *The Architectural Review*, responded to both the above critiques in a letter to A’J. He supported the plan, pointing out that it had never been the intention of the MARS Group’s Town Planning Committee to advocate a uniform or standardised city and that the use of the grid in their plan was a theoretical pattern and not a practical one. With regard to the suggested transport system, he maintained that the East–West artery would not need to transport anything like the number of people mentioned, as the majority of the workers could be assumed to live in the district opposite their work and thus they would travel mainly in a north–south direction. Finally, referring to the aesthetic criticism, he argued that while he agreed with the view that one “wanted to see London grow more like London” care might be taken to distinguish between, first, historical London and the parts that were worth keeping; secondly, the slum areas; and lastly, districts without character exemplified by many of the new suburbs. He also stated that the spirit of London, that distinguishes it from other capitals, is the smile and the cheerfulness of the man in the street, what adversity he must overcome (and many that he now faces are unnecessary) things will be better one day. Finally, he declared his belief that the people of London preferred to live in a town planned as a working one and not ‘to suit the idiosyncrasies of two or three hundred who love one place or another so much’.

It becomes evident from the above arguments, used by both sides, on the pros and cons of the MARS plan, that the basis of the discussion which followed its publication was mainly ideological (Figs. 10.1 and 10.2). It helps us to conclude that the value of the plan could be characterised as significant, not only because it

It was by no means, however, a practical plan and the fact that it was neither adopted, nor visibly incorporated in other plans, was not a failure. Nor was it considered as such by its authors and supporters. That it did not express revolutionary or iconoclastic aspirations is demonstrated above all by a special meeting of the MARS Group on 15 May 1944. This marked the culmination of a long consultation on the Abercrombie plan of 1943, and recorded the Group's "welcome" for the plan "as the first adequate and comprehensive plan for the County" (Mars Report 1944, p. 1). In a lively debate, not a single voice was heard calling for the defense of the Modern Movement purity of the MARS plan.

10.2 The Royal Academy Plan

The Royal Academy (RA) plan was also the subject of an exhibition, which opened at Burlington House on 15 October 1942. It was classified as an Interim Report by its author, the Royal Academy Planning Committee. A text, and a selection of the plans and drawings, were published by *Country Life* in the same format as the regular issues of that magazine. As a permanent record, this was more substantial than the printed matter engendered by the MARS exhibition, but in both cases it is likely that the exhibition made a bigger impact than the text. In 1944, a second report was published, also by *Country Life*. This pursued a number of aspects arising from the 1942 report without breaking any fundamentally new ground, and public reaction was muted.

The Royal Academy plan was much less ambitious than its title, and its surviving reputation, imply. It sprang from an engineering study, the London regional road improvement plan commissioned from an engineer, Sir Thomas Bressey, in 1934, and published as "the Bressey Report" in 1938. Bressey's plan, in its turn, was based on regional road planning dating back to before the First World War. His ambitious addition of new sections in Central London, including viaducts and tunnels, was more a pious hope than a practical programme.

However, Bressey had been given the support of an architectural consultant, Edwin Lutyens, who was expected to judge the impact of the new roads and suggest design treatments. To judge from the published report, Lutyens had done very little.

In January 1940, the Royal Academy decided to carry the architectural side forward, with Lutyens this time in the leading position. He chaired a distinguished Planning Committee, the so-called Royal Academy Planning Committee (hereafter RAPC), whose 15 members came from a variety of professions.⁵ There were several architects, but Bressey was a member and so was the traffic control expert from the Metropolitan Police, Tripp (1951).

⁵ The outstanding architect-planner on the committee was Patrick Abercrombie. Other members included Lord Keynes and Lord Esher. This was a powerful committee (Esher 1981, p. 95).

The remit was to consider and plan a scheme for the architectural development of London. The method was to work on the basis of the proposals of the Highway Development Survey, 1937, better known as the Bressey-Lutyens Report, for dealing with the traffic requirements of London and was primarily concerned with the architectural aspects of the new routes and the adjacent sites affected by them (RAPC 1942, p. 264).

Probably with design potential in mind, the Bressey road plan was simplified and a number of treatments were developed for major junctions. All were in the classical style, but most were in prestige locations which arguably justified such treatments. Most layouts were of a gateway or forum type.

The Official Report of the RAPC (1942, p. 266) shows that the general aims of the scheme were, first, to preserve the essential character of London as it had “developed through centuries of high ambition and achievement” and secondly, to avoid “a monotonous regularity which would be obviously alien to its nature”.

The Royal Academy plan was regarded in planning circles as an architectural concept based on Beaux-Arts lines (PRO file HLG 71/117 (1943), “The planning of London...”). With urban aesthetics in mind, the committee recommended that before any plans were put into execution; consideration should be given to laying down building lines and to the design of street junctions, roundabouts and vistas. As a consequence, according to a proposed pattern of three-dimensional planning rules, buildings might be designed in relation to one another. At the same time, “scale” and “skyline” were considered as essential factors which should not be left to mere chance or the choice of individuals. It was also noted that the distant as well as the near view ought always to be taken into account, with special regard for the aspect from the river and the parks.

It was further considered that the existing Building Acts, Local Regulations and Bye-Laws were complicated and lengthy. Instead, it was suggested that in exercising control over the height of buildings, the authority should take account of the angles of lighting measured from the opposite side of the street. Regarding the provision of open spaces, it was recommended that not only squares of ordinary size, but also large open spaces with playgrounds for children and adults should be so arranged in general public parks and gardens that all sections of the people of London should be within ten minutes’ walk of such places of rest and recreation. Finally, referring to car parks and pedestrians, the report suggested that building owners should be required to provide parking spaces within the areas of the larger business premises on the one hand and, on the other, that many streets and spaces should be closed to motor traffic and reserved for the walking public (RAPC 1942, pp. 264–266).

The road plans make clear that the dominant feature of the scheme is a ring road round the central area of London, which follows a route passing Tower Bridge, Gardiner’s Corner, Great Eastern Street City, Pentonville, Marylebone Road, Marble Arch, Hyde Park Corner, Victoria and eastward to Tower Bridge Road (Fig. 10.3). The principal aim of the ring road is to connect the radial trunk roads, to discharge and to direct traffic to and from the network of roads in the central area, and to link all the main railway termini. A similar ring road had been the main

Fig. 10.3 The RA plan for London showing Ring Road and positions of main railway stations. (Source Aslan 1942)



innovation of the Bressey plan, but the RAPC had modified it, largely to secure architectural ends.

As Aslan observed (1942, p. 267), it was surprising to find that most of the main line termini, such as Waterloo, London Bridge, Fenchurch Street, Liverpool Street, Broad Street, King's Cross, St Pancras and Euston stations, had been moved to meet the ring road, instead of the ring road being designed to meet the requirements of all the existing stations, whilst Paddington Station had been left out completely. Moreover, Astragal (1942, p. 261) in *A'J* argued that though the Royal Academy Report said a lot about open space, the drawings did not show much apart from roundabouts and strips of garden lining traffic routes.

An even more detailed examination of the Royal Academy plan leaves one with the impression that many of the parts had been designed independently of each other. For example, as Aslan maintained (1942, pp. 269–270), the Elephant and Castle scheme and the improvement of the West End and City had been planned without any interrelationship. Especially, distinct was the Elephant and Castle area which was suggested for drastic re-planning with a site for an airport. Meanwhile, a generous *place* had been designed around St Paul's Cathedral. Finally, the recommendations for the City took no account of its character and incidentally stirred up a strong protest at the possibility of the suggested removal of the markets being taken seriously (PRO file HLG 71/117 (1943), "The planning of London...").

The above suggests why, though the Royal Academy plan was well received by the popular press,⁶ it did not meet the same approval from the technical press. So, despite both the statement in the RAPC's Report that the scheme was one "for the architectural redevelopment of London", and the stance of the Committee's Secretary, Austen Hall, published in *The Sunday Times*, that the whole scheme was an

⁶ Some of the comments of *The Observer* and *The Sunday Times* were published in *The Architects' Journal*, 96, 22 October 1942, p. 261.

attempt to bring the architect into planning in its earliest stages,⁷ the plan was rejected in the technical and planning press by the growing view at that time in town planning circles that planning was not “only an affair of Avenues, Places, Axes and Boulevards” (Anonymous 1942b, p. 264). Essentially, the RA plan had been approached as architecture on a grand scale with some street improvements, and not as a town planning question. The feature of the RA plan which was particularly pointed out was that it completely ignores the fact that the persons principally responsible for a town plan should be town planners, and that both engineers and architects need to be given their terms of reference by somebody with a wider view of the problem than their own if they are to build to good purpose. But, on the whole the exhibition merely proves that engineering plus architecture is not town planning (Editorial 1942b, pp. 259–260).

Esher (1942, p. 310), as one of the Planning Committee’s members, undertook to answer the criticism raised in *A’J*. He supported the plan on the ground that it preserved the character and personality of London. He pointed out that even the changes recommended by it, though they were not fundamental town planning in the modern sense, had excited alarm lest the character of London be lost or Haussmannised into a reflection of Paris. Moreover, he stated that if the town planners wanted to go further than this, it was surely essential that they should show how the application of their ideas could be effected without London becoming perhaps “better”, but decidedly something else.

The next Editorial of the above journal was devoted to Lord Esher’s letter. It insisted that redevelopment along the RA plan lines would be utterly false to the tradition of London. It argued that the character of the metropolis particularly demanded development in landscape terms (Editorial 1942c, p. 324).

Summarising the plan and the debate which it caused, it can be noted that its value lay more in publicising an alternative to the MARS plan, than in the significance of its recommendations. These were characterised later as “a period piece of academic nostalgia incorporating every cliché in the *Beaux Arts* repertoire” (Esher 1981, p. 95). Meanwhile, the London planning debate moved on towards a comprehensive approach in both the independent and the official sectors. This new approach would emerge clearly in 1943.

10.3 The Royal Institute of British Architects Plan

The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) plan was also classified as an Interim Report, when its London Regional Reconstruction Committee—hereafter LRRC—the author of the plan, reported in May 1943. It was exhibited in the

⁷ Austen Hall’s statement included the following (*The Times*, 18 October 1942): “[...] This is an attempt to bring the architect into planning in its earliest stages. The traditional method is for the engineer to build his road and then leave the architect to make what he can of it. But by then it is usually too late for the architect to do anything effectively [...]”.

National Gallery from May to July as part of an exhibition of regional plans. It was published in the same year in a slim format, as “an outline draft towards a master plan” (LRRC 1943, p. 3). The committee had drafted an earlier report, but this had not been published. No further reports would appear.

The RIBA decided from the start, in 1941, to draw on a wide constituency composed of its branches and members in the London region. It was expected that branches would contribute to the proceedings on both general and regional issues and in relation to the planning of their own areas. The Architectural Association, which had joined the RIBA in pressing for a plan, was also strongly represented. This consultative, almost Delphic, procedure conformed to the wartime spirit of democracy, but behind it lay a desire to keep architects occupied and in touch at a time when the war had greatly restricted their professional work.

In practice, these local consultations did not produce much in the way of firm proposals and the onus fell increasingly on a very large, central committee.⁸ The terms of reference of the LRRC (1943, p. 4) were as follows:

- (i) To consider and formulate the policy of the RIBA, and its Allied Societies, on the subject of post-war reconstruction and planning in its widest aspect.
- (ii) To work in co-operation with the Regional committees appointed jointly by the Allied and in co-operation with the Reconstruction Committee of the RIBA.
- (iii) To cover the London Region on the same lines as the other Regional Committees set up jointly by the Allied Societies, to report to the Council of the RIBA through the Reconstruction Committee.

As a very serious enterprise, the committee enjoyed the attendance of Abercrombie and other leading architects who were involved in London re-planning at Ministry, County and City level, together with architects from authorities in the region. Abercrombie, in particular, became an increasingly important source of information. At the same time, he appears to have influenced the committee's proposals, though without dominating or directing them.

The LRRC's study area contained the complex generally known as “Greater London”. This was composed of the administrative area of the London County Council (LCC) with its 28 Metropolitan Boroughs, as well as 65 Boroughs, Urban and Rural District Councils outside the LCC. In all, and including the City of London and the six County councils, there were one hundred one local administrative authorities within the Region, which covered an area of about eight hundred fifty square miles and contained an estimated pre-war population of 8,500,000 (LRRC 1943, pp. 6–15). The MARS Group had chosen a similar area.

⁸ Arthur W. Kenyon was appointed as chairman, while the remaining members of the committee were Henry V Ashley, Robert Atkinson, Henry Braddock, J Murrey Easton, W Curtis Green, Stanley Hamp, Frederick R Hiorns, Charles Holden, HV Lanchester, S Rowland Pierce and Verner O Rees. A Brian O'Rorke served on the committee from its inception until March 1942; when upon his resignation H. Braddock was elected to the Committee (LRRC 1943, p. 4).

The most important innovation of the LRRC plan was its adoption of seven assumptions, which were considered as necessary before any re-planning for London could be implemented. These were the following:

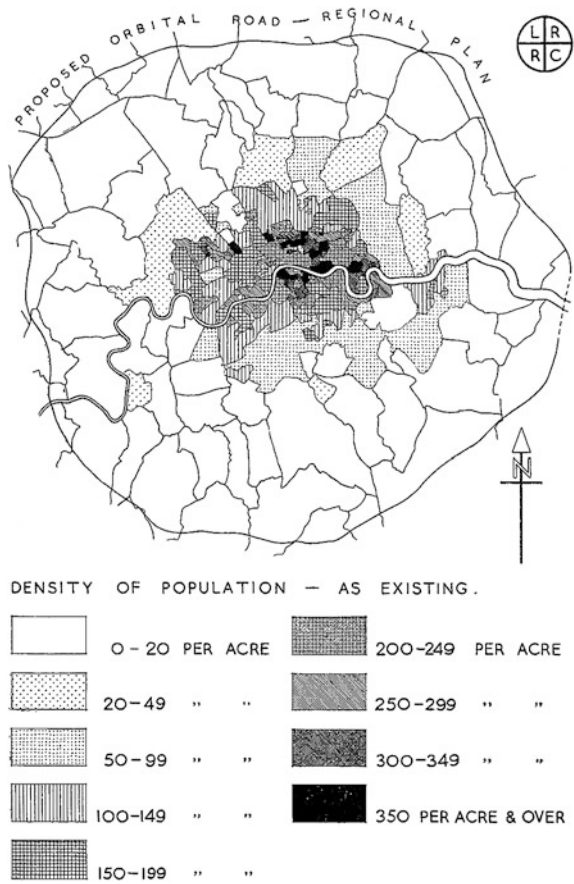
1. The constitution of an essential machinery for a national plan.
2. The satisfaction of human needs as a foundation for reconstruction.
3. A decision on the outline of the national plan.
4. The simplification of the existing legislative system of Acts, Bye-laws, etc., by the introduction of a National Code to cover the whole country.
5. The reorganisation of the building industry and modernisation of building techniques.
6. A financial system for reconstruction.
7. The solution of the general items concerning control of land, changes in the location of industry, building new satellite towns, the creation of a local improvement fund, and the provision of housing related to war damage and the increasing number of families.

But, what were the main principles of the plan? The LRRC (1943, pp. 16–47) scheme covered four sectors of planning; first, the communications of the London Region; secondly, the reconstruction of urban areas in it; thirdly, the location of the industrial areas; and lastly, the preservation of its historical features and natural character. Within these four sectors we can notice the following elements in particular.

As far as communication inside the London Region was concerned, four tasks were defined. As part of the first task, the railways and arterial roads of the London region were to be considered as part of the national transport system. As a consequence, the roads forming the radial trunk routes of their plan were to be continued as far into the centre as might be consistent with the planning of the relieving trunk ring-roads. As part of the second task, the railways, arterial roads, canals, rivers and the larger permanent open spaces were to be used as limiting components for areas of local planning. The railways and main roads in particular were considered to be destructive of amenities and as endangering life; therefore, they might be used as fundamental barriers between urban areas. In the third task, the access to arterial roads was to be strictly controlled and located in positions pre-determined by the local planning; proper segregation of the various kinds of roads were also considered necessary. Finally, in the fourth task, inter-communication between railways, roads, canals, docks and aerial transport was to be properly planned; indeed, the Inner Airport proposed by the plan, North of the Isle of Dogs, was located in a position that would link to all parts of the London Region by an integrated system of rail and road connections.

The reconstruction of urban areas (Figs. 10.4 and 10.5) was approached through five stages. The first one referred to the definition of areas of land created by the basic network-barriers of trunk communications and open spaces, which had to be re-planned in order to provide recentralised urban areas. In the second stage, these urban areas were to be made self-contained, each with its own local civic sense and pride, each provided with its own amenities in the form of schools, clinics,

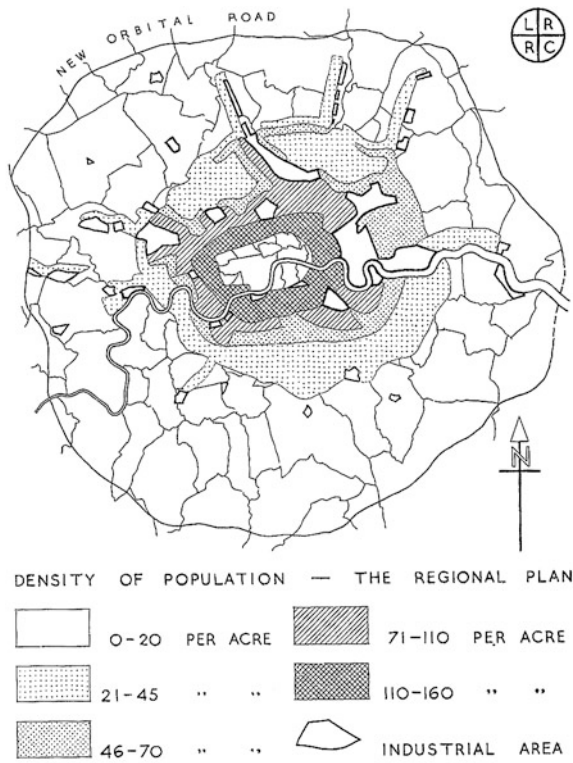
Fig. 10.4 The LRRC plan:
The density of the region, as
existing. (Source LRRC 1943,
p. 38)



hospitals, recreational, shopping and administrative centres, and each having planned provision for local light and domestic industries and for district-distribution. In the third stage, much greater public open space could be provided around the built-up areas, especially in parkways along which main roads and railways could be segregated. In the fourth one, where land desirable for parkways and open spaces for amenity was already built over, buildings might be scheduled for progressive elimination. Finally, in the fifth stage, land scheduled as unsuitable for building development might be converted into parkways or green belts with recreational facilities, market gardens, allotments, and sites for special types of schools, hospitals, etc.

The location of industrial areas was presented from three perspectives. The first one included industry and its supply services. According to the LRRC scheme, areas for heavy industry might be segregated from living areas and related to the transport system. The second perspective referred to the location of the London commodity markets. According to the scheme, London was to be served by five

Fig. 10.5 The LRRC plan: the density of the region, as proposed (Source LRRC 1943, p. 39)



recentralised commodity markets. The third perspective on the location of industrial areas related to new dock facilities. The new proposals were aimed at providing modernised dock service to the Port of London, as well as ensuring that heavy seagoing traffic should not proceed further up the Thames than the Isle of Dogs, where a number of new docks had to be constructed (Fig. 10.6).

Finally, the preservation of all existing natural features, open spaces, rivers, streams, historic buildings and other places of intrinsic merit together with the continuity of traditional character were regarded in the LRRC plan as an essential factor of planning and reconstruction. In this context, it was proposed that certain parts of the City and of other historical places should be improved to permit their better display, whilst some clearance around important buildings, such as St Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey and many other smaller features of the skyline and plan of the centre was considered readily capable of execution.

There is no doubt that the RIBA produced the most realistic plan of the three independent ones. However, the committee was increasingly aware that it lacked the detailed, up-to-date information that it needed, and that it could not itself generate. Constantly made aware of Abercrombie's powerful planning work the County Hall sensed that its practical planning role was gradually being diminished. The 1943 report, therefore, signalled the RIBA's withdrawal from advisory

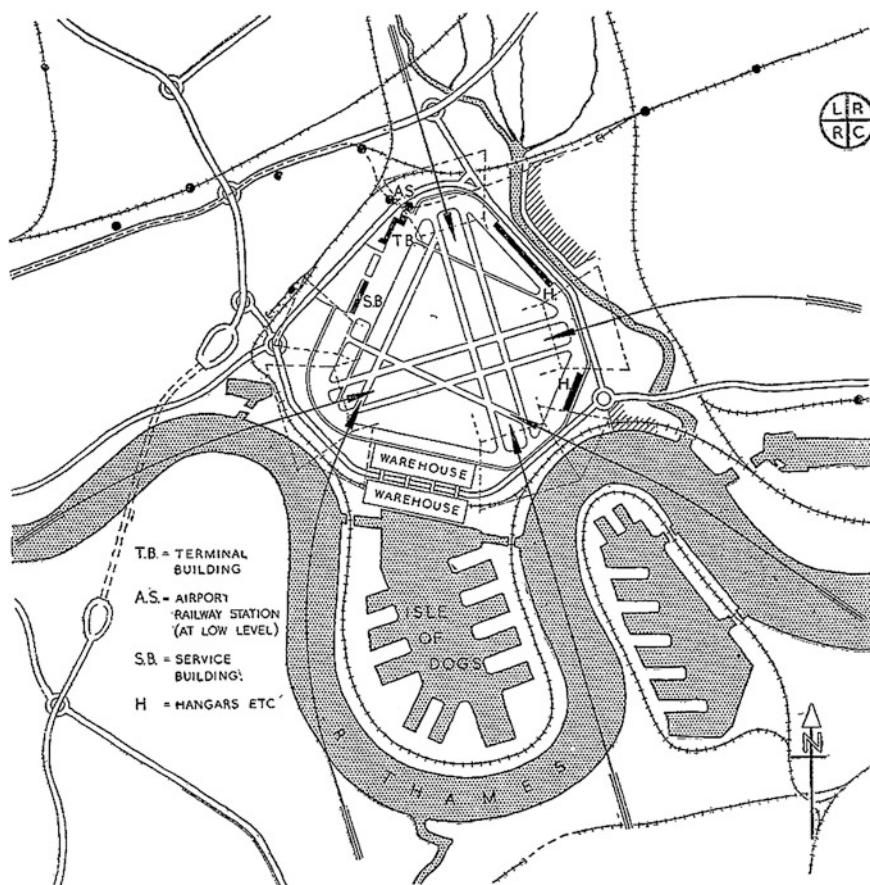


Fig. 10.6 The LRRC plan: the proposed inner airport. (Source LRRC 1943, p. 29)

activities in the planning of the London region, at any rate in formal terms. It also expressed the RIBA's support for Abercrombie's approach to planning, which was about to emerge in the form of the County plan later in 1943.

Consequently, the RIBA plan of 1943 was a very slim affair of only 52 pages. The maps and plans were crude, reproduced at a small format. Treatment of planning issues was very uneven. The main emphasis was (yet again) on communications, no doubt reflecting the availability of information in the Bressey Report. The other main areas of planning policy, such as industrial location and housing, were also very much dominated by communications. The committee, going beyond Bressey, favoured the rationalisation of the railway system to produce broad communication corridors combining road, rail, and, in some cases, canal and river. Extra open space would be created in strips along these corridors. Residential areas would then be laid out on the land delineated by the communication

corridors (LRRC 1943, pp. 16–42). Industry would be placed in locations convenient to both transport and a local supply of labour.

Although these residential areas had something in common with the “social communities” proposed by Abercrombie in 1943, their shape and size would have been determined almost haphazardly by the communication corridors. Abercrombie’s “social communities” were much more carefully articulated, with a combination of open space, transport routes, rivers and industrial districts being used to create such physical separation as was practical (Forshaw and Abercrombie 1943: plate 12, facing p. 120; 25–29). The RIBA committee’s decision to plan its residential areas around civic and commercial centres in the middle of each area meant that there would be no efficient link between the main centre of activity and the metropolitan transport system. In any case, the creation of the communication corridors clearly involved a level of investment far in excess of that required for a new road system. Also, unclear were the planning and design features of the new areas. Rather like the MARS Group, the committee restricted itself to vague statements about mixed development and city-wide density bands.

Wisely, perhaps, the committee never tackled these problems and the publication of Abercrombie’s 1943 report allowed it permanently to avoid the challenge of its most radical idea. At the same time, it should be said that even Abercrombie was far from solving all the problems generated by the application of the “social community” or “residential area” idea to a very large, established city. Neighbourhood units, which were common currency at the time, posed no problems, partly because their ideal population size was not disputed. The “social communities” could not draw on Garden City theory or practice mainly because very high residential densities could not be avoided. Consequently, the idea of London re-planned as a cluster of Garden Cities was notably absent from the debates. For example, Frederic Osborn’s call for a recasting of London on Garden City lines, with extensive re-housing of the excess population in satellite towns, reflected the aspirations of the Garden City movement leaders more than it did the London reconstruction debate in general (Young 1943, p. 232). The Garden City idea revived and flourished to a degree which could not have been foreseen by even its strongest supporters before the war, but its role was seen to be that of a decentralisation community on a green-field site outside the green belt. The resulting theoretical vacuum hampered more than the RIBA Committee, which merits a degree of comprehension from the historian (Marmaras and Sutcliffe 1994, p. 448).

The publication of the LRRC plan did not generate a long enough debate to secure full discussion of its ideas. In a criticism which appeared in *A’J* on 10 June 1943, it was pointed out that this scheme would no doubt be popular, for it maintained that “the easy way is possible” (GMK 1943, 380–384). Further, it offered the Londoner all he might wish for, that is the little house and garden or a flat if he chose, plenty of amenities, a generous amount of green space, good work places, decent transport and the historic places left undisturbed. At the same time, however, it remarked that when viewed as a whole, the main defect of this plan was the lack of a functional basis, in which all the elements of the town would be examined “under the microscope and put [...] together again” in a systematic way,

in which the various elements would be clearly ordered and work cooperatively and harmoniously. Instead of this, the LRRC plan “tries to obtain the symptoms of health by tackling the symptoms of the urban malady”.

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Chapter 11

The Official Plans for London

Abstract The submitted plans during the 1940s prepared by three official organizations: the London County Council (LCC) plan, the Greater London (GL) plan and County of London Development (CLD) plan, are examined in this chapter. The great difference between the CLD plan and the previous official ones was that it was operational and not merely advisory. Therefore, after many years of preparation, negotiations and patient investigation, there was now available for the County of London a plan for its future activities, based on a carefully considered financial budget.

Entering this chapter, it has to be noted that the presented plans here were public and official. As a consequence, they were better prepared, better produced and more political in concept, than the three independent plans. It, also, means that the material and the evidence was better organised to facilitate the work of the researcher.

After the First World War a regional planning structure was set up, culminating in the Advisory Joint Town Planning Committee, hereafter AJTPC, for Greater London (GL) created by the Minister of Health in 1927. The technical adviser, from 1929, was Raymond Unwin, whose experience linked the early days of the garden suburb and garden city movements with public housing and statutory town planning in the 1920s (Cherry 1974, pp. 87–91). There were also a number of Joint Regional Planning Committees in the London area.

By the early 1930s, the AJTPC had produced two reports. Given its great radius of action (twenty-five miles from Charring Cross), and the absence of statutory planning powers in the inner parts of London, it had concentrated on the growth and functioning of London as a spreading conurbation (Marmaras and Sutcliffe 1994, p. 433). It put forward an outline road network and an annular green belt, with satellite communities and garden cities contributing to a planned decentralisation and the retention of open spaces throughout the region. From 1935 the LCC took action to create a green belt by the purchase of agricultural land and in 1938 the green belt was given a statutory existence, but in other respects the progress of regional planning slowed (PRO file HLG 71/116, “Historical Note,...”; Miller 1989, pp. 15–44).

In the 1930s, attention switched to road planning under the aegis of the Ministry of Transport. Public funds for road improvements were limited at a time of government retrenchment, but much research was done on traffic movements and needs. In 1938, the Bressey Report, an initiative of the Ministry of Transport, published an augmented and rationalised plan of road improvements in the London region. It was based on a system of radial roads running into Central London, and ring roads. In the absence of town planning powers for most of the LCC area, the Bressey Report was seen as providing the main guidance for London improvements in the immediate future. Additionally, the green belt concept, combined with that of decentralisation, was generally acknowledged.

11.1 The London County Council's (LCC) Plan

As it has been referred, the preparation of the first official plan for London followed from the request made by Lord Reith, the Minister of Works and Buildings, to the LCC in April 1941 to study the problems of physical reconstruction., Lord Reith asked the LCC to prepare a new plan for the post-war redevelopment of London and to plan on bold lines, assuming that new legislation would make positive planning a practical proposition (Latham 1943, p. 46).

The LCC requested JH Forshaw, its chief architect in succession to Frederick R Hiorns,¹ to prepare such a plan. It, also, called in Professor Patrick Abercrombie to act as a consultant. In addition to these two persons, a team of forty-seven persons (Forshaw and Abercrombie 1943, p. 6), most of whom were town planners, worked investigating and collating existing material and making new studies in collaboration with other LCC departments, the various local authorities including the London Boroughs, government departments, the railway companies, the port authority, outside experts and public bodies (Editorial 1943a, p. 36).

The result of this intensive work, known as the *County of London Plan*, was described at the time as the most comprehensive and carefully considered report of its kind that had ever appeared in Britain. It was completed in July 1943, and after being accepted in principle by the LCC, formed the planning basis for the County (MLGP 1951, p. 71). Before its approval by the LCC it had been sent to the Minister of Town and Country Planning, the Minister of Transport, the Corporation of the City of London, the Metropolitan Boroughs and other bodies. It is also to be noted that the total number of the interested authorities was more than eighty (Latham 1943, p. 46). It is clear that with this submission the LCC wanted to have official approval before proceeding in the formulation of its detailed policy. In any case, the Metropolitan Borough Councils had a statutory right to be consulted on

¹ FR Hiorns was for many years a senior member of the architectural staff of the LCC and also a member of Lord Reith's Consultative Panel, Ministry of Works and Buildings (Anonymous 1941, p. 18)

plans made by the LCC, under the Town and Country Planning Act, 1932. But, what were the main proposals of the LCC plan?

The subject of the scheme was the County of London that is an area of about 116 square miles with an estimated population of 4,053,620 people in 1937. The City of London was not dealt with in the plan, because its planning authority was the Corporation of the City of London and not the LCC. Ten main objectives of the scheme were stated in the report. First, the social and functional analysis of the city; secondly, the decentralisation of population and industry; thirdly, the provision of adequate open spaces; fourthly, the solution of the communications problem; fifthly, the building of new housing accommodation; sixthly, the consideration of London as a great industrial city; seventhly, the facing of the existing conditions and problems of reconstruction; eighthly, the designation of land use zones and building development densities in the city; ninthly, the provision of public utility services (i.e. schools, hospitals, etc.); and lastly, the identification of areas for special development in the city (e.g. the West End, the River Front, the South Bank), as well as the protection of buildings of historic and architectural interest. But, let us examine the main features of the above items.

As regards the social and functional analysis of the County of London, four functional categories of urban area were recognised. The first was the Central area, comprising the West End, as Empire and Government centre, business, shopping, amusement, university, etc., and the City, as centre of commerce, finance and shipping, with the adjoining areas of mixed general business and industry. The second was the system of the Port and the Thames, and the Lee-side heavy industrial areas. The third category consisted of the Central Residential Areas comprising the housing district, extending in the West from Regent's Park round the west side of Hyde Park to Pimlico and coming within the influence of the West End, and the working class districts, extending North of the river from Poplar to Kentish Town. The last category consisted of the suburbs. Furthermore, it was argued that the identity of the existing communities had to be reinforced by increasing their degree of segregation. Moreover, as a means of establishing the size and organisation of the component areas of these communities, the principle of the neighbourhood was adopted, with the residential area large enough to be served by the elementary schools (Forshaw and Abercrombie, 1943, pp. 2–21 and p. 28).

Regarding the objective of population and industry decentralisation, the authors of the LCC plan, having accepted the general recommendations of both the Committee on Unhealthy Areas presided over by Neville Chamberlain in 1920 and the Royal Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population under the chairmanship of Montague Barlow in 1940, suggested that a large number of people, about 500,000, and a considerable amount of industry, might be removed from the then central location to be re-sited elsewhere (Forshaw and Abercrombie 1943, p. 30 and 34).

The LCC plan assumed that the main standard for open space was four acres per 1,000 people and that the required new open space calculation should be based on the average net density of 136 persons per acre. As a consequence, the existing open spaces in London, totally 7,888 acres, were not considered enough to cover the needs, which were estimated to reach a total of 13,316 acres. For this reason, it

Fig. 11.1 The LCC plan for London: the road plan.
(Source Forshaw and Abercrombie 1943, p. 62)



was recommended that the deficiency of 5,428 acres should be met in part by securing 1,271 acres of effective open space, leaving the remaining 4,157 acres to be found chiefly in built-up areas or on bombed sites (Forshaw and Abercrombie 1943, p. 37 and pp. 41–42).

London's most urgent problem at that period was probably that of the communications of the metropolis. In response, the proposals of the LCC plan covered all the factors of this problem; that is, the road system, the railways, the Underground, the aerodromes. The suggested road system was based on a network of ring-roads and radial roads.² There were three ring-roads and ten radial roads, named respectively for the first category A, B and C, and for the second one 1, 2, 5, 8, 11, 13, 15, 16, 19 and 21 (Fig. 11.1). The A ring-road was considered to be the main circulatory one for Central London traffic. It linked the main railway termini and utilised existing roads for long sections of the route. This route was situated on the periphery and formed the boundary of the imperial, cultural and commercial core of London. The B ring-road, perhaps the most important of the three in traffic terms, was intended to facilitate the circulation of dock traffic around Central London and between the docks, decentralised markets, goods stations, marshalling yards and industrial centres, notably those on the western approaches of London. The route of the B ring-road, it was suggested, should follow a line North of Regent's Park and on the west side, and the line of the existing West London railway between Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea, crossing the river via a new Battersea Bridge to Clapham Common. To the South, it followed the railway barrier at Ruskin Park, passing through a tunnel under the river to the Isle of Dogs, and then northwards on the west side of Poplar, between the Poplar and Stepney communities. The C ring-road was largely on the same lines as the proposed route

² As the LCC plan supports (Forshaw and Abercrombie 1943, p. 49), the objectives in planning the road system were: first, the improvement of traffic flow; secondly, the segregation of fast long-distance traffic from traffic of a purely local nature; thirdly, a reduction in the number of accidents; and lastly, the maintenance of existing communities and the removal of through traffic from them.

no 19 of the Bressey-Lutyens plan submitted in 1937, a solution which, as we saw in the previous Chapter, was adopted in the Royal Academy plan. Finally, referring to the co-relation between ring and radial roads, the main concept proposed that the above ten arterial roads should contact the B ring-road and connect to the trunk roads of the country. This was the reason for the great importance of the B ring-road for the LCC plan. At the same time, referring to the railway and Underground system, the electrification of most of the lines leading into London was suggested, together with the connection of the suburban lines with the Underground system. As far as the civil aerodromes were concerned, no suggestion was adopted in the plan. An explanation for this omission, mentioned in the report, was the difficulty of predicting, at that period, about the future technique of landing, elimination and subjugation of noise, a fact which arose from the lack of relative data because of war safety reasons. However, a central aerodrome was considered in principle as very useful because it could give quick and direct access to all parts of London (Forshaw and Abercrombie 1943, pp. 61, 63, 69–70 and 73).

The provision of new housing accommodation was also a very urgent task, which ought to be tackled immediately after the war. Comprehensive schemes of redevelopment were proposed for extensive districts, where the planning, building and architectural standards were low. All the suggested re-housing projects were based on the concept of mixed layouts of houses and flats with the proportions of each varying according to local conditions and requirements. At the same time, the maximum residential densities of the above projects were fixed at 100, 136 or 200 persons per acre. As a result, and for a theoretical 50-acre site, it was calculated that the corresponding figures of housing type were as follows. First, for the density of 100 persons per acre, up to 55 % of the people could be in houses, mostly two-storey with a few three-storey, and 45 % in flats; secondly, for the density of 136 persons, the proportions could be 33 and 67 % respectively; and thirdly, for the density of 200 persons, all housing could be in flats, with between 65 and 85 % of these being from 7 to 10 storeys high (Forshaw and Abercrombie 1943, pp. 74, 78–79 and 83).

As regards the problem of industry in the London region, two dimensions of it were considered as the most important: its decentralisation, and the reconstruction of the remaining industrial districts within the County of London. The decentralisation of industry, in particular, would have a threefold target, first, of freeing the congested structure of inner London by making land available for other purposes, principally housing and open spaces; secondly, of reducing traffic congestion by taking away heavy industrial traffic from the city centre and residential areas; and thirdly, of reducing the substantial amount of time and money spent in travelling between residence and work place. Meanwhile, reconstruction of the remaining industry was to aim: first, at grouping factories producing clothing, other types of light industry, light chemicals, and furniture; secondly, at eliminating noxious industries from the central area; and thirdly, at opening up industrial estates - specialised in printing, food, light engineering and manufacturing chemists- in some of the South London Boroughs, which possessed a big labour pool (Forshaw and Abercrombie 1943, pp. 96–98).

Fig. 11.2 The LCC plan for London: Development and zoning plan. (Source Forshaw and Abercrombie 1943, p. 120)



Another interesting question faced in the LCC plan was the solution of the reconstruction problems in general terms. Especially, they prepared detailed schemes for three typical areas, in Shoreditch and Bethnal Green, in part of Stepney, and in Bermondsey. In particular, the suggested redevelopment in Shoreditch and Bethnal Green (East London) referred to a site of 980 acres and its axonometric view, made by TL Marshall, showing the character of development at 136 density and the proportion of flats and houses that it was possible to provide (Forshaw and Abercrombie 1943, pp. 103–104).

Regarding the land use proposals, these were restricted to a general “development and zoning plan”, which showed main principles rather than details in land use terms (Fig. 11.2). As a consequence, there was no intention in the proposed scheme to alter drastically the existing use zoning of the County. In general, the location of the main industrial, housing and central business areas had been determined by the presence of docks, roads, railways, canals, rivers, etc., or by tradition, or by the evolutionary growth of London. Meanwhile, the zoning for density of building development, as it had been set out in the statutory scheme of Battersea and Wandsworth, provided for seven zones of dwelling houses, ranging from four to twenty houses to the acre, and four zones for blocks of flats ranging from 150 to 300 persons per acre. The LCC plan proposal for a common density of population per acre basis for all residential development would combine these into one range of densities, which its limits should vary between 100 and 200 persons per acre (Fig. 11.3). These latter density zones graded outwards from the central areas towards the County marginal areas; the proposed “A” and “B” ring-roads were the approximate boundaries, with certain exceptions, in these density zones. Lastly, must be noted the relevant issue of the adoption of lower maximum heights of building in order to avoid overcrowding; however, in some areas, as in the surroundings of squares mainly in central areas, greater intensity of land use was encouraged (Forshaw and Abercrombie 1943, pp. 108, 114, 115 and 119).

The provision of public utilities, the special proposals for the River Front and for the South Bank, and those for the protection of interesting buildings from a historic

the streets or squares concerned. For example, the buildings facing normal streets was suggested to be subject to greater control; whilst, those facing the most important thoroughfares and open spaces -and as all points was considered essential to be the object of a unified design-, would be required to conform to an accepted scale of design and grouping previously prepared as a complete unit. Furthermore, where buildings of national importance were under consideration, the assistance of some authoritative body or vehicle of opinion proposed to be sought. Moreover, the authors of the Report had argued that the best method of carrying out its various proposals was by building them into stages of development covering a long-term programme of 50 years (Forshaw and Abercrombie 1943, pp. 121, 127, 135–136, 139 and 145–153).

The publication of the LCC plan prompted an intense public debate, which was expressed mainly through the opposition raised by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA). The first sign of dissension appeared in a lecture given on the County of London Plan by Osborn on 2nd September 1943 (1943, pp. 207–208). Osborn advocating the establishment of New Towns rather than extensions of existing cities, argued that the chief things wrong with London were the great and growing difficulty of securing a family house with garden near ones work, the congestion of streets and other means of transport, and the insufficient space for recreation. These defects emerged because London was not managed in a correct way. However, Osborn's major criticism was focused on the fact that the LCC plan failed to address itself to the biggest problem of the citizens of London, which was "the restoration of good family living conditions in the County". Although it accepted nominally the need for the decentralisation of population and business, it failed to acknowledge the very high volume of decentralisation of people that was required, while at the same time it was equivocal about the decentralisation of industry and business. Osborn's basic concept was that London should be planned on the basis of a clear reduction of its industrial and business concentration. Such a policy should be achieved by the discouragement of London's business which had been evacuated in wartime from coming back. A further point in Osborn's argument was that the increase in the density of population in the western areas, as well as, in the reconstruction projects, implied the mass introduction of multi-storey flat living in London, which was contrary to the wishes of Londoners.

The above aggressive criticism by the TCPA was continued at a meeting held at Bethnal Green on 16 October 1943. According to *A'J*, it was "a campaign launched by the TCPA apparently with the object of sabotaging the LCC plan" (Editorial 1943b, p. 285). At this meeting, FJ Osborn criticised the LCC plan in the morning and RL Reiss offered an alternative scheme in the afternoon. As the main point of this controversy had become the level of population density, it is to be noted here that while the maximum net density proposed by the LCC was 136 persons per residential acre, which worked out at about seventy per acre overall (gross density), the TCPA favoured a gross density of twelve persons per acre only. This argument stated by Osborn and Reiss for lower densities was, of course, more popular than the corresponding argument by Forshaw and Abercrombie, as Astragal noted at the time. In this climate, it was very difficult to urge that "a good town is a compact

thing, concentration is not necessarily an evil" (Astragal, 1943b, p. 286). But, this latter view shows that the whole controversy over the LCC plan was mainly based on the antithesis between the types of built environment which emerged from the various views of the planners. The main controversy was focused on the fact that the LCC plan was the opposite of the TCPA policy at that time. This policy favoured the establishment of satellite towns to solve the town planning problem of London, where about 1,500,000 people and a corresponding proportion of industry had to be moved from the capital (Editorial 1943c, p. 331).

Contrary to the criticism of the TCPA, the twenty-eight Boroughs within the County of London showed general support for the proposals of the LCC plan, although they reacted in a different manner (Mc Allister 1944, pp. 229–234). Some of them, including Kensington, Hackney, Camberwell, Poplar and Woolwich, were faced by the problem in its national dimension. Others, including Marylebone, Chelsea, Westminster and Holborn, rejected the major road proposals in the plan, because they affected their localities directly. Many Boroughs showed a considerable anxiety about the housing densities proposed in the LCC plan and the widespread introduction of flats. Most of them accepted the need for a proportion of flats, but there was considerable opposition to flats of more than three storeys and almost universal rejection of flats of more than seven storeys. Finally, most of the riverside Boroughs welcomed the proposals, because they gave Londoners access to their greatest open space.

At the same time, the Port of London Authority (PLA), which was not, of course, a Borough but, being involved in riverside matters of London as well, although it did not make any public announcement on the plan, made known its views through its chairman's, Thomas Wiles, statement in their bulletin *PLA Monthly*, namely that the means of livelihood might take precedence over the problematical attractions of riverside gardens, and that ship-owners were convinced that interference with the traditional use of the river frontage would be seriously detrimental to trade (Mc Allister 1944, p. 229).

As Cherry pointed out (1988, p. 123), the major weakness of the LCC plan lays not of its own making, but in the narrow geographical confines to which it had been addressed, that is, the Administrative County of London, whereas territorially what was in fact London spread far wider than that. Complementary effort to the LCC plan, which intended to remedy the problems raised from its narrow limits, was the Greater London plan. This plan was prepared also by Patrick Abercrombie approximately one year later than the LCC plan. It will be our next object of analysis.

11.2 The Greater London Plan

In December 1944, an exhibition was held at the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, open only for the planners and not the public in general. The exhibition illustrated the proposals of Professor Abercrombie and his team for the London Region. Work on this plan had started in August 1942, when Abercrombie had been

commissioned, on behalf of the Standing Conference on London Regional Planning and at the request of the Minister of Town and Country Planning, to prepare an Outline Plan for those parts of Greater London which lay outside the jurisdiction of the LCC (PRO file HLG 71/168, p. 1). Among the collaborators of Professor Abercrombie were named for research and design work, Harry Stewart, Chairman of the Technical Committee³ of the standing Conference on London Regional Planning,⁴ Gordon Stephenson, TC Coote, PW Macfarlane, LF Richards, PF Sheapheard and VN Prasad (Abercrombie 1945a, pp. 4–5), while the section on Road Planning greatly benefited from the help of H Alker Tripp. On the same day, as the exhibition was inaugurated, an advance edition of the plan report was circulated to the Local Authorities and the Executive Joint Committee for their consideration. In effect, the scheme, known as GL Plan 1944, represented the views of Professor Abercrombie as an independent consultant. But, what were the main features of the GL plan? And, first of all, what was the area of the plan?

The GL plan dealt with an area of 2,599 square miles, which extended outwards from the LCC boundary for roughly thirty miles from the centre of London, and which in 1938 had a population of 6,250,000. The area included the whole of the counties of Middlesex, Hertfordshire and Surrey and parts of Kent, Essex, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Berkshire. The total area of Greater London, hereafter GL, envisaged in the plan, including the County of London and the City, amounted to about 2,717 square miles, with a population of about 10,250,000 (Abercrombie 1945a, p. 22). The area was formed roughly by a quadrangle having corners at Haslemere in the South West, Gravesend in the East, Royston in the North, and High Wycombe in the North West. It was partly built-up, while containing large stretches of agricultural and woodland most of which was in private hands (Kent and Samuely 1945, p. 314).

Aim of the GL plan was to discourage the further growth of industry and population within the London Region and to provide for their better distribution and grouping on the one hand and, on the other, to make suggestions for communication improvements, and for the conservation and extension of the green belt around London.

The next important feature of the GL plan concerns its structure. In general terms, the plan was based on a division of the above area into four concentric rings (Fig. 11.5). These four rings were described as:

³ The Technical Committee had the following composition: Harry Stewart (Ministry of Works and Planning), Major HE Adlington (Ministry of War Transport), JH Forshaw and H Westwood (LCC), FJ Forty (City of London), RH Buckley (Essex County Council), Lt Col AE Prescott (Hertfordshire County Council), FW Greig (Kent County Council), AG Harfield (Middlesex County Council), WP Robinson (Surrey County Council), AH Prince (Buckinghamshire County Council), CE Boast (Croydon County Borough Council), AT Bridgwater (East Ham County Borough Council), EP Pye (West Ham County Borough Council), H Cliffe (Non-County Borough Councils), EE Ryder (Urban District Councils) and AJ Wilshire (Rural District Councils) (PRO file HLG 85/34).

⁴ Chairman of the Standing Conference on London Regional Planning had been appointed EG Culpin (PRO file HLG 85/34).

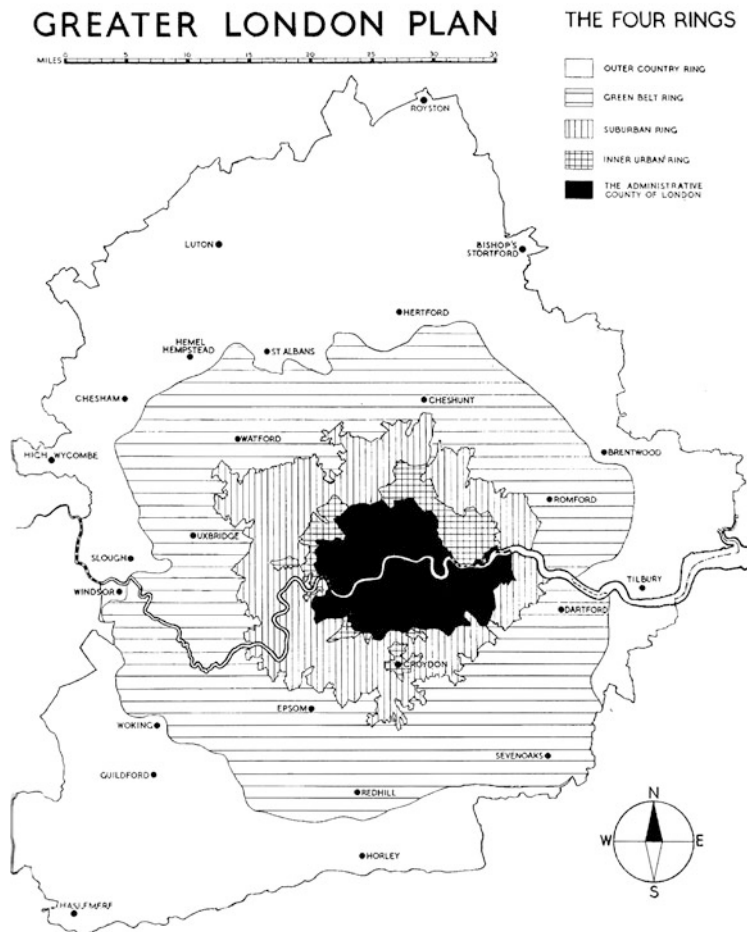


Fig. 11.5 The GL plan: The proposed four rings. (Source Abercrombie 1945a)

- i. the Inner Urban Ring;
- ii. the Suburban Ring;
- iii. the Green Belt Ring;
- iv. the Outer County Ring.

The Inner Urban Ring represented the fully urbanised built-up areas adjoining the LCC area; the Suburban Ring represented the area beyond the Inner Urban Ring and approximately within twelve miles of Charring Cross, in which, the excessive densities of the Inner Urban Ring had not yet been reached, but in which land had been built up to a some degree by tolerable conditions; the Green Belt extended for

Table 11.1 Increase of population, 1919–1939

Period	LCC and city (2)	GL plan area (3)	Total of columns (2) and (3)	England and Wales
1919–1921	–55,539	41,868	–13,671	1,086,699
1921–1931	–87,520	834,573	747,053	2,065,678
1931–1939	–358,903	1,130,607	771,704	1,293,623
(Jan)				
Total	–501,962	2,007,048	1,505,086	4,446,000

Source Abercrombie (1945a, p. 27)

about five miles beyond the Suburban Ring, comprising much open country and including numerous established centres of population; finally, the Outer Country Ring included the remainder of the Region and contained distinct urban communities situated in land otherwise open in character and mainly agricultural (PRO file HLG 71/168; Abercrombie 1945a, p. 22).

In regard to the size of population, in the period 1919–1939 there was an increase of 2,007,048 in the area of the GL plan (Table 11.1), while the population of the LCC and City areas decreased by 501,962. The net increase for the Region was thus 1,505,086, that is a third of the total increase for England and Wales during the inter-war period. Since the natural increase was normal, the above phenomenal growth is to be accounted for by the internal migration, that is, by movements of the population within the country, excluding overseas emigration and immigration. Two main occupational groups were represented in this movement; first, skilled and unskilled industrial workers from South Wales, the North and North-West, and secondly, white-collar workers, clerks, assistants and scientific workers. The second group of the workers was increasing more rapidly than the first one (Abercrombie 1945a, pp. 27–28).

In the context of the decentralisation of population from London, the report recommended that a total of 1,033,000 persons should be moved, 618,000 of them under the County of London plan, and 415,000 under the GL plan proposals. The redistribution proposed within the Region entailed three major movements. First, provision was made for the development of a few smaller sites which, though they were recognised as being unacceptable from a planning point of view by reason of their relative nearness to London, could not be avoided; since immediate accommodation was necessary to be found for overspill, in the interest of a short-term housing policy and providing for 120,000 people from the County of London and 5,000 from Croydon. Secondly, additions were proposed to existing towns together with the establishment of eight new towns, providing for 261,000 people to move to the existing towns and 383,000 people to, according to Professor P Abercrombie's term, the eight new satellite towns. A third aim was to decentralise 163,750 persons outside the GL plan boundaries, mostly between forty and fifty miles from the centre of London. Finally, it was also suggested that 100,000 persons should be decentralised beyond London's area of influence (Abercrombie 1945a, pp. 32–33).

The effect of the above decentralisation of population policy on the form of the four-ring structure of London Region was to be as follows. Within the Inner Ring Road, which was the ring adjoining, or almost adjoining, the LCC boundary, the proposed maximum net residential densities were 175 persons per acre for different parts of this zone, while it was from this ring that the greatest decentralisation from areas covered by the Report was proposed. In the County of London plan the authors had proposed three density zones of 100, 136 and 200 persons to the acre. In the Suburban Ring, which was the remainder of the continuously built-up area of London, a general net residential density of 50 persons per acre was proposed as a maximum and the only increase to be allowed was the building up of vacant frontage. In the Green Belt Ring only small increases to existing towns were to be allowed, as this was to provide primarily for the recreation of Londoners and to prevent further suburban growth. Finally, in the Outer Country Ring, the Report proposed that the new satellite towns should be located, as it was considered to be the principal reception area for the decentralised population. In other respects, however, the agricultural, and not the recreational, background was to predominate in this zone (Abercrombie 1945a, pp. 33–37).

Referring to pre-war industrial trends, it was recognised that in the County of London developments had fallen broadly into three groups. First, the heavy industries, mostly located in big units along the Thames water-front and adjoining the canals and railway junctions, were concerned with food manufacture and processing, heavy chemicals, heavy engineering and public utility plants. Secondly, a wide variety of small-scale light industry and workshops intermixed with occasional large factories and with congested working-class housing, located in the East-End Boroughs and spreading westwards into Islington and St Pancras, as well as West End Boroughs of Westminster and St Marylebone, was concerned mainly with clothing, light engineering, metal work, furniture manufacture, light chemicals, printing and stationary. Lastly, an area of more modern industry associated with the motor and electrical trades and the preparation of foodstuffs was located in medium to large factories in the Boroughs west of London. It was noted that approximately 30 per cent of GL's factory growth between the wars was accounted for by the decentralisation of industry from congested sites in Inner London; the principal labour pool had remained on the east and south-east sides of London giving rise to "an excessive daily journey to work" (Abercrombie 1945a, pp. 38–39 and 44).

The above industrial situation for London changed to a significant degree after the heavy bombing. A limited number of key firms, mostly on engineering work, either moved out completely at the Government's request, or erected shadow factories in other parts of the country. Mostly these industries moved right out of the GL Region to sites in the west of England and the north-west. Industrial damage had been fairly severe in some of the congested London Boroughs, especially among factories in the 100–300 employee group. According to the Report, the "decentralization of business firms is very desirable and as far as is practicable firms who have moved to the suburbs or to the practicable firms who have moved to the suburbs or to the provinces should be encouraged to stay there at any rate for dealing with their routine work" (Abercrombie 1945a, pp. 44–45 and 47).

Furthermore, the industrial proposals within the GL Region were twofold, negative and positive. On the one hand, new industry was prohibited in certain areas, principally in the three inner rings (Inner Urban, Suburban and Green Belt Rings), while on the other, it was encouraged in the selected towns outside the Green Belt Ring, and in some cases outside the London Region. In particular, it was proposed that north of the Thames and within the Inner Urban and Suburban Rings no further industrialisation should take place except in the Barking-Dagenham area. Some industry from Reconstruction Areas should be decentralised with a proportion of the population to the outer towns or new satellites, and noxious industry to more isolated areas. Referring to the south of the Thames, the proposed industrial ban would apply to the Inner Urban and Suburban Rings, except for the Mitcham-Croydon neighbourhood, secondly to a limited extent in the Erith neighbourhood and, thirdly in the Cray Valley if the adjoining land on the west was used for a quasi-satellite (Abercrombie 1945a, pp. 55–57).

As far as communications were concerned, a number of proposals were made referring to the road system, the airways, the navigable waterways and the railways (Abercrombie 1945a, pp. 62–78). A new road system was recommended consisting of five concentric rings, ten express arterial highways and a sub-arterial road system as follows (Fig. 11.6). The “A” ring-road was a sub-arterial for all-purpose traffic in the central area. The “B” ring-road was an arterial for fast traffic around the central. The “C” one was a sub-arterial for all-purpose traffic too (“North and South Circular”). The “D” was an express arterial at a radius of twelve miles from the centre along the Green Belt Ring, which was needed for express one-purpose traffic on the one hand and, on the other, to girdle the general limits of the built-up area. Lastly, the “E” ring-road was a sub-arterial of parkway types for all-purpose traffic. At the same time, the ten express arterial highways were suggested to link London, through the “B” ring-road, with the whole country.

Referring to the airways, a ring of airports around London was envisaged, with one large trans-ocean airport at Heathrow. Communications to London should be provided by road via express arterials 2 and 1, by the express arterial “D” ring, which passed the eastern side of the site, and by electric railway to Waterloo and Victoria Stations by means of a short branch to the existing Southern Railway line east of Feltham.

Meanwhile, regarding the navigable waterways, the maintenance of the canal system from the Midlands to the Thames was suggested as an important and cheap form of transport. In addition, the following recommendations were made: first, canal frontages should be planned, secondly, locks at Brentford and Tottenham should be reconstructed to increase the rate of transit of craft, thirdly, investigations should be made into the possibility of giving increased access by water to the Park Royal and Slough Trading Estates and, lastly, at salient points central collecting and distributing centres with adequate warehouse and loading facilities should be set up.

Finally, in respect to the railways, it was considered that the solution of their problems was largely inherent in the proposals for the decentralisation of population and industry, which would materially reduce the amount of daily travel between London and the suburbs, and that no drastic alterations or additions to the

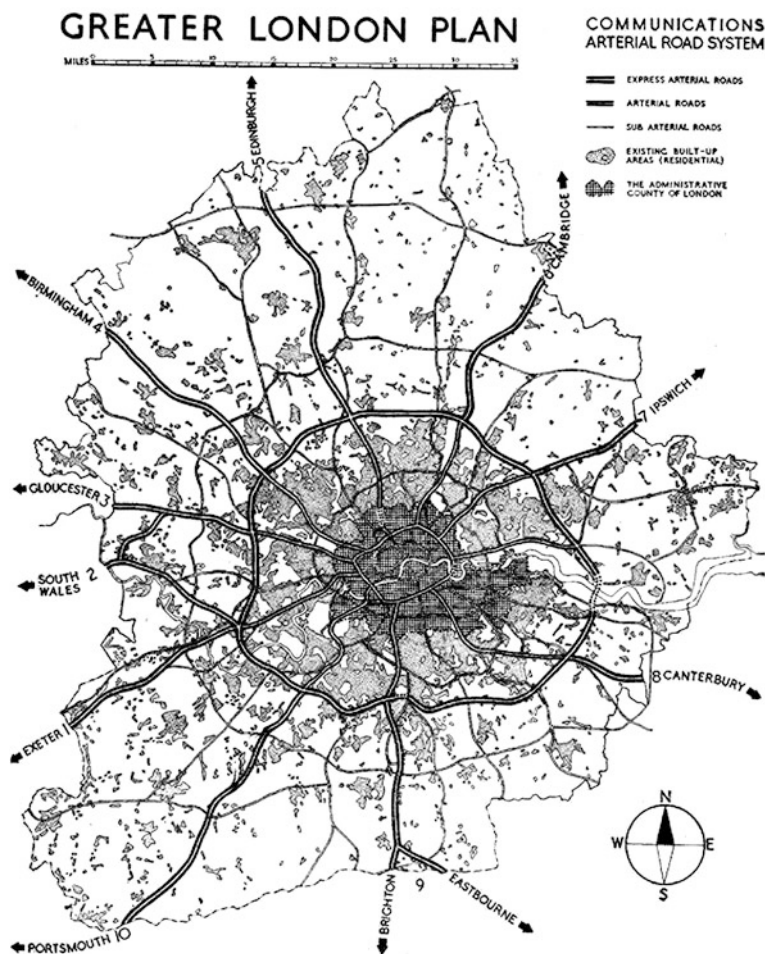


Fig. 11.6 The GL plan: The road proposals. (Source Abercrombie 1945a, p. 78)

railways were necessary. The suggestions put forward mainly concerned: first, the general electrification in the Greater London area of the main lines leading outwards to certain points, as Didcot, Princes Risborough, Aylesbury, Warford, Luton, Hitchin, Bishop's Stortford, Chelmsford and Basingstoke; secondly, the provision of certain additional short length of passenger track; and thirdly, three branches from the Outer Goods Ring, mentioned in the County of London plan, were suggested, mainly comprising existing tracks, over which it might be found convenient to develop goods traffic (PRO file HLG 71/168, p. 5).

The conservation of good agricultural land, which was the main aim of the Scott Report, became a central point of the GL plan and was combined with the issue of the preservation and extension of the green belt around London. It is a matter of fact

that a wide green belt was proposed immediately, where building would be allowed in exceptional circumstances only, and which would be primarily for recreational use. This green belt would lead into an open countryside kept mainly for agricultural use. Lesser girdles were proposed for the separate communities, both old and new ones. It also was suggested that the green wedges leading from the open country into the Inner Urban and Suburban Rings should be preserved, as well as to retain every existing open space. The deficiency in open space for the population proposed, was calculated to be 10,526 acres if a standard of ten acres per thousand population was adopted and 4,243 on the basis of 7 acres per 1,000 population. Furthermore, to estimate the total acreage of open space needed in the built-up area of London it was necessary to add to the above figures the 8,273 acres deficiency of open space shown in the County of London plan. However, the revolutionary feature of the open space proposals was that on all the background land, outside the areas delimited for building, no new buildings was to be allowed; as a consequence, the need for wholesale public acquisition of open areas was reduced (Anonymous 1945, pp. 211–212).

In addition to submitting his Report on the physical aspect of the Region and on his proposals for its re-planning, Professor Abercrombie drew attention to the fact that there were 143 Local Planning Authorities, excluding the County Councils, in the GL area as a whole. He also pointed out that the movement towards Joint Committees had progressed somewhat slowly in this area, and that a mere reduction in the number of planning units and an increase of their size would not, of itself, necessarily produce the desired results. Moreover, to ensure that future developments in the area would conform to the suggestions, he proposed that Parliament should be asked to create a Planning Authority responsible to the Minister of Town and Country Planning. This Authority would have power to buy, sell and administer land, and be in charge of a Master Plan, which would be based on the County, City and Greater London plans.

As far as the educational requirements and the health services were concerned, the GL plan took account correspondingly of the Educational Act, 1944, and the White Paper “A National Health Service” presented by the Minister of Health and the Secretary of State for Scotland to Parliament in February, 1944 (Abercrombie 1945a, p. 117 and 120). Especially, an attempt had been made to estimate what the new educational requirements would mean, on the grounds that the school is an increasingly important element in any residential neighbourhood and that the school system should help shape community plans. Consequently, in any community plan the location of the various schools was considered by Professor Abercrombie of great importance. In the areas already developed or partly developed many sites would be unalterable, while in redevelopment schemes, fixed points in the educational layout would be provided by those existing school buildings which were worth preserving. For a new community of 60,000 population the suggested total number of schools would be as Table 11.2.

On the other hand, relating to the health services, it was understood that a fully organised system of hospitals would be the key-stone of the National Health System Service, and that the new hospital service might be complete and ready of access. It

Table 11.2 Total number of schools suggested for a community of 60,000 Population

Nursery	24
Infant	12
Junior	12
Secondary (Boys' Modern)	3
Secondary (Girls' Modern)	3
Secondary (Boys' Grammar)	1
Secondary (Girls' Grammar)	1
Secondary (Technical)	2
Young People's College	1
Technical College	1

Source Abercrombie (1945a, p. 118)

would include general and special hospitals, sanatoria for tuberculosis, accommodation for maternity cases, for the chronic sick and for rehabilitation. As far as the location of the above building installations, it was proposed that certain larger special hospital facilities might well be placed in defined parts of the Green Belt Ring, and that each community in the region should seek to define the provision it should make and allow for that provision in its community and neighbourhood plans (Abercrombie 1945a, pp. 120–121).

Turning now to the public reaction which followed the publication of the GL plan, it has to be stressed first of all that it was a setting out of the principles according to which the London Region should be re-planned, and not a comprehensive development plan. Correctly making this assumption Kent and Samuely (1945, p. 315) proceeded to criticise Abercrombie's GL plan by putting six questions, as follows:

- i. Does the plan fit into a national and regional pattern of reconstruction?
- ii. Does the plan preserve and develop the individual character of the Region's various parts?
- iii. Does the plan establish an organic pattern of development?
- iv. Does the plan provide for the private life of the citizen?
- v. Does the plan cater for the collective needs of the community?

The result of their review of the plan amounted to the following criticism; because of the fact that the proposals of the GL plan aimed to implement the Barlow Commission's recommendations, and dealt almost exclusively with the location of industry and the industrial population, they failed to examine London as a commercial and administrative centre as well. From this point of view, Kent and Samuely argued (1945, pp. 316–319) that the whole task of decentralisation as it was considered in the GL plan would have to be reviewed. The proposed size of the London Region also created some doubts, if the whole area were to be considered as one planning unit, even though the solution of the problem was based on a perfect communication system on the one hand and, on the other, if the establishment of

separated units within London, and new satellite towns as well, could contribute to the character of London as a Metropolis. Their view was that the creation of physically separated towns was bound to promote dissolving rather than unifying tendencies within London, seen as a regional unit.

As for the assumption of the GL plan that a Planning Authority should be established with powers to control location of industry and movement of population, the authors objected that it was based on a more or less static total population number for the whole Region. They believed that it seemed to be entirely possible that with very different population numbers the basic ideas of the plan would not be found to be workable.

Furthermore, regarding the conditions provided for the citizens' life, two matters which arose from the GL plan proposals were, first, the distance between the work place and the home, and secondly, open spaces. In general terms, the decentralisation both of industry and of the population was intended to bring work and home nearer to each other. Also, decentralisation could be effective in several ways, but only the use of satellite towns had been identified as a significant means. The authors remarked that the claim that if a town of 60,000 people could offer industrial services of sufficient variety for all, suggested that the ideal size of a satellite town had been chosen rather arbitrarily. On the other hand, individual needs for recreation had been recognised and open space had been given prominence, although the problem of equitable distribution did not seem to be completely solved. From this latter point of view, to some of the people in the Suburban and Inner Urban Rings, little open spaces were available, and they had a long way to go to find large green spaces.

In the meantime, Kent and Samuely argued (1945, pp. 322–323) that there was no doubt that the collective needs of the communities, with possibly a few exceptions, had been well served by the proposals of the GL plan. In more detail, they stated that if everything was carried out as intended, education and health services would be of a very high standard, satisfying completely the most modern requirements. As far as traffic in general was concerned, the suggestions for roads, railways and airfields would in themselves have a very beneficial effect, but it should not be forgotten that the efficiency of a plan for the London Region was very much dependent on the efficiency of the LCC area, although the latter was not dealt with in this plan. Moreover, regarding the central aerodrome in Heathrow, the fact that its area was sited far from the sea was considered as a disadvantage, because there were no facilities in it for marine aircraft as well, although by 1950 it was a fact that seaplanes were irrelevant.

Finally, referring to the practicability of the GL plan, the most promising indication for its realisation was considered to be the suggested “administrative machinery”, that is the formation of a Planning Board to supervise all activities and deal with individual problems through its various branches, such as an Open Space Board, a Housing Corporation, and a Regional Public Cleansing Department.

Concluding this analysis of the GL plan, as criticised by Kent and Samuely (1945, p. 325), its chief merits were perhaps to be found in the general boldness of the approach, in the fact that the problem of the Region as a whole was always kept

in mind, that decisions were at this stage made only in respect of matters which might be dealt with by a central authority, that machinery was proposed to create such central authority as a permanent institution, and that sufficient scope and encouragement was given to Local Authorities for preparing the many detailed plans still required.

In addition, dispelling some doubts on the GL plan, Hall (1985a, p. 100) considered as very important its contribution because it supported the principle of planned decentralisation to New Towns. In other words, it opened the way to be established in the New Towns Act of 1946, which recommended that the New Towns should normally be built very much as Howard had proposed them, with a size range of 30,000–50,000 or perhaps 60,000, by a special development corporation set up for the purpose, generally responsible to Parliament and with direct Treasury funding. As Cherry argued (1974, p. 127), the idea of decentralisation through satellite development gained widespread acceptance, although it was not everywhere that New Towns were seen as the machinery for dispersal.

Recapitulating the GL plan, it should be noted that it has made an important step forward in the idea of planned location for the industry and housing, while its advocacy for planned decentralisation became the post-war model for all urban areas. The essential limitations of its philosophy were that it promoted an absolute design solution which would solve a specific social problem, without referring to costs and benefits. As Hall et al. underlined (1973, vol II, p. 68), all these were due to a tradition of planning where new policies were determined as the outcome of popular debate among the experts, while the implementation was entrusted to professional planners trained within a design tradition. Since the plan was the last advisory in character, it has helped start the period of execution of the operational plans for London, and especially of the CLD plan, which will be analysed in the following Sect. 11.3.

11.3 The County of London Development Plan

The final plan for London in the 1940s started to be executed by the Town Planning Committee of the LCC in July 1948, under the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947. The Committee had 3 years to complete its work and submit its proposals to the Minister for approval (Editorial 1949a, p. 61). Indeed, submission occurred on 31 December 1951 (Ling 1955, p. 126), when the CLD plan had been already approved by the LCC, and it was formally transmitted to the Minister of Housing and Local Government. According to Childs (1951a, p. 731), who was a frequent commentator of *A'J* in town planning matters during the period 1951–1952, the preparation of the Development Plan had followed “the lines of the diagnosis”, as they had been determined by the County of London plan, 1943 of Forshaw and Abercrombie, which could be summarised on the following lines: first, congestion of traffic, secondly, depressed housing, thirdly, intermingling of housing and industry, and lastly, lack and maldistribution of open spaces.

The great difference between the CLD plan and the previous official ones was that it was operational and not merely advisory as, for example, was the County of London plan, 1943 (Childs 1951b, pp. 761–763; Ling 1955, p. 126). It must be seen essentially as the outcome of a combination of the LCC's own development programme for the next 20 years, and of the forecasted requirements of government departments, the Metropolitan Boroughs and other authorities. As Childs supports, the importance of this plan was threefold: first, it was a kind of official statement of the LCC policy both on immediate and long-term redevelopment, secondly, it provided as order of priority for the carrying out of proposals, and thirdly, it attempted to estimate, very broadly, the cost of the proposals at current price levels. Especially, for the latter point, it is interesting to note that the maximum annual gross capital expenditure, which the LCC could undertake during the period of the Development Plan would amount to roughly £ 27,000,000 over the whole period. This estimate did not take into account the LCC's current programme of housing in the out-county estates; expenditure on this account during the first 5 years of the plan was likely to amount to about £ 33,000,000. However, the LCC believed that this scale of development was not likely to be reached owing to shortages of labour and materials, especially in the years of rearmament, and that some adjustment in the order of priorities for the different sections of the plan would have to be made from time to time.

The CLD plan's approval by the Minister occurred on 7th March, 1955, as the process of Public Inquiry and Ministerial investigation had taken up over 3 years after its submission. Nearly 7,000 objections were received when the plan was placed on exhibition, but, as Arthur Ling, the Chief Planning Officer of the LCC, informs us, about 30 % of these were either withdrawn before the Public Inquiry or were not made the subject of debate (Ling 1955, p. 126). The result of this long-term procedure was that for the first time in the history of planning in the County of London there was an approved plan having statutory authority. In this context, the Minister's approval was an important event which led to the culmination of a planning process which began as long ago as 1924, when the Council passed resolutions to prepare planning schemes for areas on the fringes of Hampstead Heath and Streatham Common. But, what were the main proposals contained in the CLD plan?

Besides the written evidence, two basic plans had been prepared by the Town Planning Committee that is by the Planning Section of the Architects' Department of the LCC (Editorial 1951b, p. 759). The first of them was the Town Map, which outlined the proposed Use Zones, and the other, the Programme Map, which showed the phases of development (Childs 1951b, p. 763). In both of these plans, the main proposals of the CLD plan were concentrated on the following tasks: road programming, industrial decentralisation, urban densities in comparison with housing needs, and comprehensive development areas.

In regard to the road proposals (Fig. 11.7), the concept of a fast motorway, known as the "A" ring-road, through the Administrative County had been already abandoned by the Minister of Transport in May 1950 (Childs 1951a, p. 731). As a consequence, the CLD plan had had to base its road proposals on the existing routes. Actually, important radials were suggested to be linked to the inner circular

for 1,163 acres for new industrial building, but he seemed to be under some misapprehension, because the Council's clear intention was to reserve this land for the relocation of wrongly sited industries from other parts of the County. As Ling argued (1955, p. 126), perhaps the Minister felt that such a wholesale movement of non-conforming industries was unlikely during the next 20 years because of financial limitations, and meanwhile the existence of substantial areas of land zoned for industry was an unnecessary temptation to other industrialists, who were not tied to London or even in London at the moment.

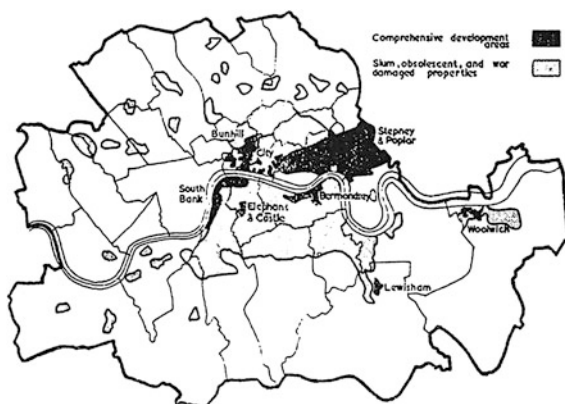
The residential densities became one of the most controversial components of the CLD plan. It proposed that the distribution of population in the county area should be in the form of five main density zones, as follows: 200, 136, 100, 70 and under 70 persons to the acre. The 200 zone included the City, Westminster, Finsbury, Holborn, the southern part of Paddington, St Marylebone, St Pancras and a few small areas including that adjoining the west end of Kensington Gardens. The 136 zone covered most of Chelsea and such areas as Poplar on the north side and Southwark on the south side of the river. The 100 zone included Fulham, most of Hammersmith and parts of outer London, for instance Hampstead. The 70 zone included Greenwich, Woolwich, parts of Lewisham, Wandsworth and adjoining Boroughs. Lastly, the under 70 zones were more in the nature of low density pockets (Childs 1951b, p. 765).

As a result, the CLD plan recommended the moving out of the County of London of about 380,000 people. It was estimated that in the first 5 years of the scheme implementation, the overspill would amount to 145,000 and the balance of 235,000 would occur in the second period of 6–20 years. The Minister had not accepted this precise figure, and had preferred to amend the Statement, so that it referred to the fact that the realisation of the proposals in the Development Plan was dependent upon accommodation being provided outside the County for a large number of people, probably in excess of 250,000 (Ling 1955, p. 128).

However, the main controversy with the Ministry started when the Minister reduced the densities of population in areas, such as Hampstead, Highgate, Sydenham Hill and Blackheath, which were envisaged as 70 or above, down to 50 or 30 persons per acre. The proposals of the CLD plan for allowing higher densities in these areas of great residential amenity had already met with strong objection at the Public Inquiry (Ling 1955, p. 127). The LCC's view was that London could not afford to have people spread thinly on the ground in the best residential areas, while so many were living in overcrowded conditions on low-lying land which in many cases was alongside industrial areas, railways or gasworks. The LCC had already demonstrated the principle of making these pleasant areas on high ground next to large open spaces available to a larger number of Londoners by its imaginative proposals for the redevelopment of extensive sites adjoining Putney Heath and Wimbledon Common.

A materialised example of the above controversy consists in the fact that the LCC had designated a number of areas for compulsory purchase at Sydenham Hill and these had been removed from the plan by the Minister. Moreover, although the Minister had increased the extent of residential zoning, the areas in which this had

Fig. 11.8 The CLD plan:
The areas of comprehensive development are shown superimposed on the main areas of slum, obsolescent and war-damaged property.
(Source Childs 1951a, b, p. 761)



been done were in nearly all cases most unsuitable for residential development, being on low-lying land next to industrial areas. Finally, the total effect of the Minister's modifications on the housing programme of LCC was a reduction in potential housing accommodation for approximately 12,000 people over the next 20 years (Ling 1955, p. 127).

Projects for comprehensive development had been recommended by the CLD plan for the following eight areas (Fig. 11.8): the City of London, Stepney and Poplar, Bermondsey, South Bank, Elephant and Castle, Bunhill Fields and Finsbury, Lewisham and, lastly, Woolwich (Childs 1951a, p. 732). These were areas of upwards of 39 acres that the LCC had selected for early development. For the projects of City, South Bank and Elephant and Castle, in particular, the following proposals had been made. In the City (Childs 1951b, p. 763), 244 acres were scheduled for comprehensive redevelopment, with a concentrated effort to be made in the first period of rebuilding on the areas of bomb devastation behind Moorgate and to east of St Paul's Cathedral. Along the South Bank, an area of 425 acres including 137 acres of the River Thames had been designated for comprehensive redevelopment with priority given to the provision of new governmental offices. Finally, at the Elephant and Castle the intention was to redevelop to new building lines and to lay out a large roundabout serving the existing roads some of which were to be widened, notably London Road. The Minister approved on 7th March, 1955, the eight areas of comprehensive development which the CLD plan contained, making certain modifications to the proposals for the City of London, relating particularly to traffic problems. The most important of these was the elimination of the western and eastern ends of Route 11 (Ling 1955, p. 127).

Furthermore, the CLD plan had designated six areas on the Town Map as Special Areas or Precincts, the general intention being that planning control should aim to preserve and further encourage the traditional functional and architectural character of the areas. The Minister reduced the size of the Government and Commonwealth area, enlarged the St Paul's Cathedral Precinct, indicating at the same time that he was not satisfied with the detailed proposals that had been prepared so far, and left practically

unaltered the proposals for the University of London and British Museum area in connection with the very important project for a National Library which was a subject of heated argument at the Public Inquiry and which he approved. He also deleted any reference to a special Medical and Professional area in St Marylebone, making it instead part of the residential zone in which professional institutions and uses associated with the medical profession would be allowed. At the same time, he indicated that the same policy of restriction should be followed in the case of offices, which had increased enormously. The Minister amended the Written Statement so that normally the LCC would not give consent to any change of use to offices where the premises either with or without adaptation could continue to be used for residential purposes, whether it be as blocks of flats, dwelling houses, hotels, residential clubs or hostels (Ling 1955, pp. 126–127).

As a conclusion, the CLD plan should be mentioned that it secured a positive acceptance from the public, as well as the professionals, perhaps because it was realistic and based on the previous planning experience for London, which had been assimilated by the interested parties. Some serious omissions were however noted, particularly in the road proposals, which would need better defense than they had yet been given to make them acceptable (Editorial 1951b, p. 759).

However, the main deficiency of the plan lays in the initial stage of its introduction. It is interesting to refer that the Town Planning Editor of *AJ* points out in December 1951 (Editorial 1951b, pp. 759–760):

[...] But this plan is not the proper beginning; it is doubtful if the completion of it through the filling in of details should be the responsibility of its authors. Whereas ordinarily the best system of planning may be through two tiers, a regional one and a local one within the national superstructure, London being as vast and complex as it is an intermediate tier, a sub-regional plan, i.e., *this* present plan, is beyond all doubt valuable, and perhaps essential. But although the LCC admits, and indeed emphasises, that the carrying out of this plan depends on the goodwill and co-operation of its neighbours, a proper regional plan for Greater London has never even been attempted and no agency to make it exists. The CLD Plan may fall because of this. But there is perhaps not much that can be done about that now except through forced co-ordination by the responsible Government departments. It may also fail at the other extreme, i.e. because the LCC using this intermediate as a beginning will proceed to detailed *local* planning [...].

Additionally, and while at first sight it may seem that the Minister had made substantial alterations to it till its approval in 1955, it is apparent that in its main principles and in the majority of its details, the Minister had endorsed the LCC Development Plan.

All the above were well indicated by the Ling's judgment (1955, p. 128), where he said, that it was a source of some satisfaction that after so many years of preparation, negotiations and patient investigation both by the members and officers of the Council and by the Minister and his staff, there was now available for the County of London a plan for its future activities, based on a carefully considered financial budget, and that the Minister in approving the Plan had expressed his opinion that it would "provide a sound and wisely conceived framework, within which the life of London can continue to advance and develop in the years ahead".

“The preparation and adoption of this comprehensive design for the world’s greatest city is”, said the Minister in his letter, “a significant event, which in years to come will be accorded a notable place in the pages of London’s history”.

At the end of this explanation of the administrative procedure of the CLD plan and its statutory establishment, the following question arises: what were the influences and the consequences of the planning activity developed mainly during the 1940s on the reconstruction process of London?

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Chapter 12

Consequences and Implementations in London by the Proposed Plans

Abstract The influences and the consequences of the planning activity developed mainly during the 1940s on the reconstruction process of London are considered. The task of decentralisation or dispersal of industry, offices and population as well as the developments relating to the road and railway planning of London in town planning terms is examined in this chapter.

As town planning is not a static process, but one which moves forward at a pace equal to that of the economic resources by means of which the plans are carried out, we must now turn to the following question: what was, in actual terms, the progress of the planning results developed for the London area during the early post-war years, that is in the late 1940s and in the 1950s?

In regional terms, the main objective could be summarised as the task of decentralisation or dispersal of industry and population as it had been defined by the Barlow Commission (see Chap. 5). It was to be achieved mainly through the strengthening of the existing peripheral towns and the establishing of new satellite towns at 20–30 miles distance from London. Indeed, this initiative was also fundamental to the plans proposed by LRRC, LCC, GL, and CLD. As Hall supported (1989, pp. 34–35), instead of proposals to reorganise national, commercial and political life, the Barlow report suggested the regulation of new factory jobs. At the time, they failed to recognise that the extra jobs were not in manufacturing but in services, particularly in offices. Nevertheless, the report did not only propose controls on employment, but also called for effective physical limits on London's growth, through a more efficient town and country planning system. Moreover, the Distribution of Industry Act, 1945, was intended specifically to give the Central Government the power to divert the growth of employment away from London and towards the depressed industrial areas of the interwar period (Hall 1963, p. 22).

State policy, prompted partly by missile attacks (V1 and V2) in 1944, adopted the above recommendations in principle, and undertook in an initial stage attempts to discourage the return to London of evacuated persons, firms and Government Departments, and later to move population, industry and offices out of the County of London area. This policy is foreshadowed in a Memorandum, written by the Minister of Reconstruction, Lord Woolton, on 15 September 1944. The Minister

stated that he accepted the suggestions submitted by the Minister of Health on the need to take all possible steps to postpone the return to London of people who for one reason or another left London during the war. As it is well known, the establishment later of the 1945 Industry Act gave the Board of Trade powers to control factory development.

In his turn, Lord Woolton recommended the Minister of Health and the Chancellor of the Exchequer to take action towards a policy preventing the re-entry of this population into London, especially, as legal powers to prevent entry into London were not available. The Minister of Reconstruction proposed the following actions (PRO file CAB 87/35 1944, "15th September 1944"):

"[...]

- (1) I have asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will agree to keep out of London for the present all the Departments and sections of Departments, which are still situated in other parts of the country. There will be strong pressure in many cases for their return to London, but this should be resisted.
- (2) The Minister of Health, in the name of the Government, should ask evacuated commercial and industrial firms to stay out of London for the present. This should be done by general advice to firms and by individual letters to some of the larger undertakings (e.g. the Prudential Assurance Company). The Ministry of Health can no doubt get a list of the large undertakings in question (it need not be complete) from other Departments.
- (3) The Minister of Health should continue his publicity urging evacuees to stay away until the housing position gets better.

[...]"

The above recommendation was accepted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and was approved by the Sub-Committee on Housing, which had Lord Woolton (Minister of Reconstruction) in the Chair (PRO file CAB 87/35 1944, "28th September 1944"). At the Meeting on 18 September 1944, it was pointed out that there was already a general prohibition on the return of Government Departments to London, although there were some exceptional cases, where new and special considerations had arisen since the original evacuation took place.

In 1947, an official Memorandum was circulated to give the Local Authorities guidance in the preparation of their development plans. This set out in detail exactly where the overspill from London was to go. The Memorandum may be summarised as follows (PRO file HLG 71/118 1953, "The Situation..."):

- (1) London authorities were asked to adhere in the control of development and the preparation or revision of planning schemes to Abercrombie's Greater London plan as modified by the Report of the Advisory Committee for London Regional Planning and subject to certain comments contained in the Memorandum itself. In effect, the Greater London plan as conceived by Abercrombie was accepted subject to detailed modifications and with it, of course, was accepted the general idea of decentralisation from the inner core, the stabilisation of the population level in the suburban ring, the preservation of the

green belt ring and the building up of selected localities in the outer country ring in order to accommodate the decentralised population.

- (2) Distribution of population. This was the essence of the Memorandum. The whole Greater London policy was expressed in terms of the distribution of population—so many in this locality and so many in that, with the implication that these were the populations for which the local authorities should plan. The decentralisation scheme was of course included in the tabulations of population distribution given in the Memorandum, for in addition to giving the target population for the whole region there were also set out in detail the ultimate populations and accepted expansions of the places in the green belt, outer country ring, and outside the region, which were nominated to receive the overspill from the inner parts of London. Reception capacity in all these places was added up and equated to the decentralisation necessary from inner London and by implication the ultimate populations of the overspill areas were also fixed. Thus, the Memorandum did set out in detail exactly where the overspill from London was to go. (It should be noted here that the Memorandum as published left certain points unsettled, e.g. South Essex and W Middlesex had still to be considered, and not all the New Towns sites had been decided upon, but these gaps were filled in reasonably soon after publication, and all references to the 1947 Memorandum in the paper referred to the published document as subsequently added to or slightly amended).
- (3) Industry. The Memorandum affirmed the Government's policy of restraining the growth of London's industry and ensured that existing industry in the inner areas was decentralised to keep in step with the overspill of population.
- (4) Communications. The Memorandum set out the broad plan for future highway development being a modification and simplification of the original Greater London Plan proposals. At the time of publication of the Memorandum, Abercrombie's railway proposals were still under examination.
- (5) Open spaces. The Memorandum reaffirmed the principle of the green belt and the green wedges and announced the Ministry's intention to prepare a plan which would show in detail the land to be preserved for further development. The plan was prepared and issued to local planning authorities soon after.

By 1953, the position in terms of the distribution of population could be summarised as follows. The main task of decentralisation of population from the Inner Urban Ring of London still remained to be done, as only a modest start had so far been made and the population reductions achieved had been counterbalanced by natural increase. There had been some tendency for people to leave the central areas of their own will as was already happening pre-war, but there was no evidence to show that they were moving to places selected for expansion nor was their employment moved with them. In the Suburban Ring, there had been a steady build-up of population in spite of the policy to keep it stable, while in the Green Belt and Outer Country Ring, there had been a further build-up of population. Actually, it is difficult to estimate the exact position of the population in the various rings of the Greater London plan, but Table 12.1 gives a rough comparison between

12.1 Rough estimates of population by ring (in thousands)

	Mid-1938	June 1949	% increase or reduce
LCC	4,063	3,375	-16.9
Inner urban	1,396	1,257	-9.9
Suburban	2,993	3,377	+12.8
Green belt	864	1,081	+25.2
Outer country ring	834	995	+19.3
	10,150	10,085	-0.4

Source PRO file HLG 71/118 1953, "The Situation...", p. 7

the figures for 1938 and 1949. The reductions of population in the LCC and Inner Urban Rings over the period 1938–1949 were primarily due to the non-return of people who left Central London during the war (PRO file HLG 71/118 1953, "The Situation...", pp. 6–7, 11).

In employment decentralisation terms, controls exercised since the war had been almost exclusively concerned with industry as opposed to other forms of employment. The operation of the policy of restraining industrial growth in the London Region up to October 1948, was reviewed in the White Paper on Distribution of Industry (Cmd. 7,540) and it is relevant to quote three points. First, up to that date in the Greater London Area, the effect of the restrictions was to limit any industrial building to 5.3 % of the total for the country. Second, this was a much smaller proportion than its share of the total working population which was then 22.3 %. Third, there was a striking contrast with pre-war, namely that between 1932 and 1938, Greater London and the whole of the Midlands had 57 % of the new industrial development, whereas a roughly comparable figure for the post-war period (to October 1948) would be 19 %.

However, since the end of 1948, the overriding considerations of dollar exports, import saving and defence had tended to make the problem much more difficult even than it was before. Industrial growth in the London Region had been more and more at the mercy of the fact that very many of the British key industrial resources, which could make valuable contributions to the national well-being, happened to be located in the London area.

In late 1950, the Minister of Town and Country Planning, referring to the continuing growth of London, made the following nine recommendations (PRO file HLG 71/1341 1950, "London: Paper by the Minister..."):

- (1) a much stricter distribution of industry control over all new factory building and factory extensions in the Greater London Area;
- (2) licenses to be available in new towns for factories which made the most effective contribution to decentralisation;
- (3) his Department to work out, in consultation with others concerned, ways of reducing industrial values in the inner London area;

- (4) the Departments to work out at the same time the inducements that might be needed, following reduction of industrial values, to persuade industries to move out;
- (5) his Department to explore with the Treasury the need for a higher rate of Exchequer grant towards loss on acquisition by local authorities of industrial land in the inner London area;
- (6) the Board of Trade to control the use of all existing industrial premises in the Greater London Area;
- (7) local housing authorities to be empowered to control all sales or lettings of houses or to acquire any house in the Greater London Area;
- (8) local authorities to be encouraged to acquire as much land as they will despite restriction of capital investment;
- (9) his Department to work out a scheme for nationalisation of the land through unification of the reversion to take effect in not more than 10 years.

Furthermore, another great problem of the decentralisation effort was the fact that London was functioning as a “magnet” attracting the industrialists, because of the market of London. A market which was considered as the biggest market on his doorstep and that was a saving in transport cost. According to the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, the core of this problem, as it was stated in early 1947, was that the pull of London would not be completely checked and could only be counteracted by creating new employment outside. New firms would not be encouraged to come into London or existing firms to expand (Dalton 1948, p. 403).

Moreover, Griffith (1955, p. 62), who was an official of the LCC and one of the officers who had been trying to carry out the Council’s policy of partial industrial decentralisation, argued that the main problem of excessive employment in London was found in its central area, an area which was congested with industrial, commercial and office uses. Apart of these problems up to the end of 1953, one hundred forty five industrial firms had moved out of the London area, transferring to the out-County estates (73 of them), to the New Towns (71 of them), and to the expanded towns (only one of them).

However, contrary to the recommendations made by the CLD plan (CLDP 1951), according to which land in the County should be reserved for the reorganisation of existing industry which might remain in London and should not be regarded as available for new industry or for industry coming from outside the Administrative County. And to the principle of the GL plan in limiting or reducing industry, a survey, carried out in 1952 in the County of London, showed that out of 23 premises used by 18 firms which had moved to New Towns, 22 had been re-occupied for the same or similar purposes, and one had been demolished for housing. Meanwhile, of the 73 firms which had moved to the out-County estates, only 12 had been displaced by redevelopment (Griffith 1955, p. 60).

A similar problem appeared when localities vacated by those moving to the New Towns were re-populated by families moving to London from the provinces; these newcomers arrived at an estimated rate of about 100,000 a year (Editorial 1950a, p. 117). In its general dimensions, this problem derived from the fact that, according

to the law (*Town and Country Planning Act, 1947*), no permission was required for changes of use within seven industrial use classes.¹ In addition, no permission was required for a change from general to light industry.

Finally, the issue of the dispersal of offices out of Central London must also be discussed. By 1948, the Government had put forward a plan to move out 40,000–50,000 civil servants, principally for strategic reasons. But, as the nuclear threat appeared to reduce the strategic value of dispersal, the programme was not pursued with great vigour (Aucott 1960, pp. 37–38).

Anyway by the early 1950s, the London Transport Executive pressed for the dispersal of work to the suburbs on the ground that it was uneconomical to provide equipment for use only at peak periods. Until then, government policy had been concentrated only on industrial dispersal, and offices and commerce were dealt with separately from industry. This policy changed in 1955, when the Minister approved the Development Plan for the County of London, and asked for further surveys of existing and potential office employment. Simultaneously, his amendments to the plan, re-zoned some office and commercial areas in the Central Zone for residential use.

By 1956, the office problem was put in perspective. The point was put clearly by Duncan Sandys, then Minister of Housing and Local Government, telling the Town Planning Institute in his speech to its Annual Dinner in March 1956, that the biggest town planning problem in Britain at that time was that of reducing the fearful congestion in London. It was primarily due to the enormous movement of office workers, which in turn was due to the fact that so many offices were concentrated in a comparatively small central area (Aucott 1960, p. 38).

What, however, was the precise problem of offices in Central London? After all, during the war, the population of this central area had fallen by 25 %, and that of the rest of the County levels by 16 %. As Aucott writes, after the war, the population rose again but not to pre-war levels. By 1948, the central area population had begun to fall again and by 1952 the whole County was decreasing. Up to 1954, the Green Belt and Outer Country Ring showed a very large increase of population. By 1960, about 1,250,000 people were employed in the six Central London Boroughs, that is in the City of London, Westminster, Finsbury, St Pancras and St Marylebone, their number having risen steadily since 1948. Meanwhile, the rest of the County had remained static. Between 1948 and 1958, the LCC approved plans for 44.4 square feet of office space in new buildings, replacements, extensions and changes of use in the central area. The peak year was 1954–1955, when building restrictions were eased.

What then was the extent of the dispersal of offices from Central London? According to the above survey of Aucott (1960, pp. 39–40), the total number employed by all the firms of decentralised offices was estimated to be 12,500 in the

¹ These classes were: (a) light industry, which covered uses which create no nuisance; (b) general industry, which covered the remainder of industry, apart from special industries; (c) five special industries use classes, covering a great variety of noxious and offensive trades (Griffith 1955, p. 60) (*General Development Order 1950*).

late 1950s. Two efforts to disperse offices out of Central London are of especial interest. The first one was the experiment by Hemel Hempstead New Town in offering 100,000 square feet of new office space in early 1950 (Griffith 1955, pp. 52, 62); the second one was the emergence of the provincial city of Norwich as the home of the large Norwich Union Insurance Societies. Moreover, about 27,000 civil servants in decentralised public services must be added to the dispersal total. For example in March 1959, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury told the House of Commons that 27,000 civil servants were working outside London. The total of these two figures, about 40,000 people, is equivalent to about 3.5 % of the central area's labour force (Aucott 1960, p. 40, 43, 50). These data make clear that office dispersal represented a very low percentage in the employment decentralisation issue in London.

In any case, the planning situation of London in the early 1950s was not considered as satisfactory by the authorities. In an extended, but unfortunately, unsigned and undated (c. 1950) paper, prepared probably by the Minister of Town and Country Planning, under the title "London; Our Great Planning Failure", it was argued that the real solution of this problem should be identified as the public ownership of urban land. The anonymous author pointed out that the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947, conferred wide powers of acquisition on local authorities, but restrictions on capital investment in the post-war period had virtually confined public acquisition to land needed for immediate development. In addition, he added that a substantial relaxation of the restrictions on capital investment might be seen as a useful long-term proposal, in order to allow large-scale public acquisition (PRO file HLG 71/1342 undated and unsigned, p. 10).

The developments relating to the road planning of London in town planning terms will be examined here, whereas practical progress in the redevelopment areas will be the central object of the last part of this book. As we already saw, the RA, LCC, and GL plans had incorporated some of the suggestions of the Bressey-Lutyens Scheme, correctly known as the "Highway Development Survey 1937" (Greater London), published in 1938. In addition, the CLD plan proposals, which submitted in December 1951 and were approved by the Minister in March 1955, provided merely for a series of isolated improvements at well known black spots and bottlenecks, which however should give some relief, but could not cure London congestion (Buchanan 1956, p. 233).

In this context, the "A" ring road was intended to be a main circulatory route for Central London traffic. As a consequence, it became of major importance. Meanwhile in April 1950, it was announced in the House of Commons (Editorial 1950b, p. 31) that the proposed "A" ring road would not be built (MLGP 1947, p. 79). This was a significant development, because decisions in principle had been already reached by Central Government on most of the major proposals in the officially suggested London plans relating to the new and improved roads.

Moreover, the London traffic problem became the subject of a special report by the London and Home Counties Traffic Advisory Committee (1951). The report recommended that ten specific schemes in Inner London should be undertaken at once, and six others just outside the centre should be given second priority. The first

group included the Hyde Park Boulevard and the widening of a section of Euston Road, while the second included the Cromwell Road Extension and the Notting Hill Gate widening. It also was recommended that the possibility of *arcading*, that is of setting back the footways under cover of the buildings should be explored as a means of providing additional road space (Buchanan 1956, p. 233).

Finally, in the area of London railway planning, as had been recommended in the LCC plan, an Expert Committee—the Inglis Committee—was appointed early in 1944 to examine the whole situation and to make recommendations. Indeed, the Inglis Committee submitted its proposals, which later were reviewed by a working party set up by the British Transport Commission. These new, revised, proposals were submitted to the Ministry of Transport in February 1949. Subsequently, the Ministry considered the relationship of these proposals to the London plans in consultation with the local planning authorities, but it soon became clear that most of the major rail improvements would have to wait for a long time and there could be no urgency about the more radical proposals contained in the Railway Plan (MLGP 1951, p. 79).

Ending this approach, it is now time to proceed in the examination of the features of the various reconstruction projects of comprehensive character, which were implemented in the Central London area mainly in the 1950s. This latter point will be the subject of the last Part IV of this book.

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Part IV

Redeveloping Central London

Chapter 13

Re-planning the City of London

Abstract The features of the various reconstruction projects of comprehensive character, which were implemented in the Central London area mainly in the 1950s, are dealt in Part IV. This chapter considers the proposals submitted especially for the City of London which had as a basic promoter the Corporation of the City of London, namely NJ Aslan's proposals, FJ Forty's proposals and the Holden—Holford plan. A significant outcome of this work was the introduction by Holden—Holford of the “floor space index” and the day-lighting code” in urban planning technique.

When someone is referred to the re-planning procedure of the City of London after the air-raids during the Second World War, he/she will recall first of all the “lost opportunity” of its rebuilding after the Great Fire of 1666 and the legend of the so-called “rejection” of Wren's Plan (Improvements and Town Planning Committee ITPC 1944, p. I). The Fire started in a baker's shop in Pudding Lane, just north of the Old London Bridge, in the early hours of Sunday, 2 September, and by the end, three-quarters of the old City had been burnt out. It has been estimated that 13,000 houses, St Paul's Cathedral, 87 out of 109 parish churches, 43 Livery Company Halls, a third of the buildings were destroyed or gravely damaged (Holden and Holford 1951, p. 147 and 149). Only about 75 acres remained undamaged within the City walls, the ruin being so complete that the Thames could be seen from Cheapside. As Holden and Holford inform us that the damage caused was estimated at £10,000,000 in the currency of the day, a sum which is difficult to estimate at modern values.

On the other hand, the areas destroyed in the 1940–1945 period amounted to approximately 225 acres widely distributed over the 660 acres which today comprise the City. The most heavily blitzed areas were estimated in 231 acres (PRO file HLG 71/147). Especially, the worst German air-raid took place on 29 December 1940, when approximately 164 acres of built-up land in the City were destroyed, including 20 of the City's ancient churches, 16 of the Livery halls, and a large part of Guildhall (Hasegawa 1999, p. 122). The loss of rateable value between 1939 and 1944, almost wholly caused by air-raid damage, was two million sterling or about one-quarter. The cost of replacing totally destroyed buildings was estimated to be

about £70,000,000; this amount did not take account of the contents of the buildings or of roads and services, or of the cost of repairing damaged buildings. Consequently, the value of buildings destroyed was probably less in 1666 than in 1940–1945, but socially and economically the earlier catastrophe was by far the greater for in those days City comprised nearly all of London.

Both these disasters had been considered as the “golden” opportunity for rebuilding this central place of London, which also suffered heavily because of the need to redevelop speedily “as a centre of international trade and finance”.¹ A similar situation was observed after the 1940–1941 aerial attack on the City. Indeed, as we have seen in the case of the re-planning of London as a whole, the private and the public interests, regarding the facing of its future development, were expressed with the publication of a number of plans.

However, before entering into the examination of these plans, it is important to make some reference to the problems accumulated in the City of London during the first decades of the twentieth century. As Holden and Holford support, the war damage occurred everywhere in the City of London fabric, but the main destructions were concentrated into six sections. The first was around Shoe Lane, extending from the newspaper offices on the north side of Fleet Street to Holborn Circus, and around Ludgate Circus. The second one comprised the following five areas (Holden and Holford 1951, pp. 185–187, 190, 192, 196, 203, 206 and 212):

- Upper Thames Street from Blackfriars to London Bridge;
- The south-east of St Paul’s from Cheapside down to Queen Victoria Street;
- The north of St Paul’s from Newgate Street to the Churchyard;
- The area around Wood Street and north from Cheapside to Cripplegate;
- The area near the Metropolitan Railway cutting.

The third section was extended around parts of Queen Victoria Street and Walbrook. The fourth contained parts of Lime Street, Billiter Street and Fenchurch Street, as well as the Commodity Market area north-west of the Tower. The fifth section was the smallest one, extending around the Chamomile Street. Finally, the sixth section comprised the Houndsditch and Aldgate High Street area, and the south-east corner of the City (Holden and Holford 1951, p. 216, 218, 221, 223, 225 and 228). This new catastrophe of the City, which as a whole was a historic monument, prompted public opinion to press very early for action for its rebuilding.

The first plans for the “new” City were prepared by institutions and planners acting privately, as it happened for London as a whole as well. The first of them was in the context of the Royal Academy (RA) plan for London, which we saw in Chap. 10 (especially in Sect. 10.2). The RA plan was published on 15 October 1942 and included proposals for the City of London as part of its plan for the central area

¹ This sentence has been quoted from the sub-title of the following book: The Institute of Bankers (1961), *The City of London, as a centre of International Trade and Finance*. Kent: Stapples Printers Ltd.

of London. The second plan was suggested by NJ Aslan, a young town planner. Aslan (1943, pp. 429–432) published his proposals for the City on 9 December 1943. The third plan was prepared FJ Forty in July 1944, while the last one was planned by Holford together with Holden in April 1947.

13.1 NJ Aslan's Proposals for the City of London

Aslan's plan² for the City needs to be examined together with the scheme for Central London by the same author in order to make his recommendations clearer. It was published on 8 October 1942 (Aslan 1942, p. 235), and it made a big impact in the wartime planning literature (Anonymous 1942, pp. 236–237).

Aslan proposed that a ring road should pass via London Bridge Station and other main railway stations. He considered that the City would be bisected so that the commercial centre remained part of Inner London, while the industrial area would be excluded from it. Incidentally, London Bridge, where the ring road crossed the river, was the terminus for large relatively ships. Furthermore, Aslan proposed the retention and improvement of the existing street network by means of re-designed road junctions and, where necessary, the construction of new routes (Editorial 1943, p. 421).

Aslan's new proposals for the City that is those of 9 December 1943, differ somewhat from tentative suggestions put forward as part of the plan for Central London as proposed by him on 8 October, 1942. Aslan's latest proposals considered the City as one of the local centres which suffered especially from traffic congestion. So, in order to relieve the pressure of through traffic, two north-south and two east-west by-pass routes were provided, which would collaborate with that proposed on 8 October 1942, ring road (Aslan 1943, p. 429 and 432).

At the same time, the flow of traffic within the City was improved by the provision of the following five facilities. First, by roundabouts at the most important road junctions. Second, by local service roads and service spaces for every business zone, leaving the main thoroughfares to carry only traffic which was in motion. Third, by a new bridge south of St Paul's, a proposal dated from c. 1910; additionally, traffic would not be allowed further north than Victoria Street, the remainder of the monumental approach being reserved for pedestrians. Fourth, by an improved approach to St Paul's from Fleet Street, the open space around the Cathedral being slightly increased in size and the roads widened to avoid the bottleneck which would otherwise be created between Lutgate Hill and Cannon Street. Fifth, by widening Upper and Lower Thames Streets to act as service roads for riverside wharves.

² This scheme was prepared by Aslan as his thesis for the diploma in Town Planning and Civic Architecture at the University of London in 1936, and this is the reason why it was not included in the review of independent plans for London (see Chap. 10).

Even more, other improvements were suggested in Aslan's plan for railways and the markets, including the City area. Blackfriars, Holborn Viaduct, Cannon Street and Fenchurch Street Stations were placed underground and connected with London's existing underground railway system, which made it possible to remove all railway viaducts from the City area.

Aslan's plan for the City of London had also suggested a method of private redevelopment. According to this method, commonly known as "pooling", all owners within a given block—such as that having Cheapside to the north, Queen Street to the east, Cannon Street to the west—should come together and discuss future development on the basis of the procedure outlined below. First, each owner would furnish through his surveyor information concerning the superficial area of his property, and also the maximum area that would have been obtained had it been developed before the war to the full extent permitted by the London Building Act of 1894. A standard unit would then be determined, which would allow for position as well as extent of property, and in terms of which the value of the various properties would be calculated. Second, the building line would be adjusted as necessary to provide better service roads and service spaces, which would greatly enhance the value of the property and have the additional advantage of allowing redevelopment to an average height of eight storeys. It was also suggested that the heights of the different zones would be varied in accordance with: (i) the locality, (ii) the width of the adjoining streets and (iii) the contours of the ground. For instance, to preserve amenity around St Paul's, buildings in this area should not be as high as in other parts of the City. On the other hand, buildings outside this area, especially those overlooking open space, and those on low ground near the river, might go as high as ten storeys in addition to a basement and perhaps a sub-basement. The resulting superficial area, which would be about the same or more than before pooling, would be re-divided among the owners on the basis of the unit valuation given to their original property, each being given, as far as possible, the same site as before (Aslan 1943, p. 432).

The criticism generated by Aslan's plan for the City, had been focused on the proposals for specific sites. In particular, the area around St Paul's Cathedral and the Bank had been subject to negative comments. The problem with the proposals for St Paul's was that the result of the various traffic regulations at this point was that the Cathedral was still ringed around by roads. Actually, though an attempt had been made to divert through traffic from the immediate neighbourhood of the Cathedral, both St Paul's Bridge and the new approach road to the Cathedral from the south on the one hand and, on the other, the provision of an alternative route for north-south traffic in the form of a tunnel under the river required St Paul's to remain separated from the area of the Cathedral precinct of which it naturally formed part, and especially in the east, south, and south-west directions. This separation was the outcome of a stream of traffic coming from Aldersgate, Cheapside and Cannon Street and wishing to proceed west via Ludgate Hill (Editorial 1943, pp. 421–422).

The other outstanding problem of Aslan's proposals for the City was that the traffic problem around the Bank of England, the centre of City business, remained

unsolved. The idea of establishing a road surrounding the nine-way crossing in front of the Bank was very difficult to be applied. So, Aslan's suggestions for two east-west relief roads and those for north-south tunnels were likely to prevent only to some degree the traffic which wished to pass diagonally through the City, from gravitating towards the Bank.

Besides Aslan's plan for the City, another, known as the Sketch plan, was prepared by Lindy and Winton, and was presented in early 1944 (Lindy and Windon 1944, p. 257). However, this plan had no significant influence on the developments which followed in City planning from the official point of view.

13.2 FJ Forty's Proposals for the City

The first systematic attempt to re-plan the City of London during the war was undertaken by the Improvements and Town Planning Committee of the Corporation of London—hereafter the ITPC—chaired by the City Engineer, FJ Forty. It was published under the title *The Preliminary Draft Proposals for Post-War Reconstruction in the City of London* in July 1944.

On 8 January 1941, Alderman Sir Howard Button, the Town Clerk, and FJ Forty were called by Lord Reith, the Minister of Works and Buildings, to discuss together various aspects of town planning matters for the City. The Minister asked for the following information. First, the nature and extent of the damage which had occurred, and an estimation of the proportion of destroyed buildings or those which would need to be demolished in relation to those which could be repaired. Second, any proposals which the Local Authority had in mind for redevelopment, and whether the destruction of parts of the area by enemy action had facilitated or modified plans previously made. Third, whether planned redevelopment of the area was likely to be prejudiced by: (i) speculation in site values, (ii) the risk, notwithstanding wartime restrictions, of uncontrolled development pending the application of a redevelopment plan and (iii) any special conditions or interests. Fourth, whether there were any special financial considerations affecting the redevelopment of the area apart from the questions of the relations between local government and national finance awaiting settlement after the war. Fifth, whether it was likely that any rebuilding on the sites of wholly demolished buildings would be in public interest during the war (Improvements and Town Planning Committee ITPC 1944, pp. i–ii).

On 7 March 1941, Lord Reith was asked officially by the Corporation of London for permission to prepare a provisional plan of redevelopment for the City of London. On 24 July 1941, the existing ITPC of the Corporation of London became the Improvements and Town Planning Committee, consisting of 34 members. The proposals of the new Committee were submitted on 24 May 1944. According to the Committee's Report, three courses appeared to have secured the Committee's attention (Improvements and Town Planning Committee ITPC 1944, p. ii, c and iv, 5);

- (1) To present an “ideal” plan expressing a physical shape of the City which, given unlimited means, might fulfill every ambition for the future.
- (2) To present a plan of immediate post-war improvements and other proposals limited to war-damaged sites, such as might be carried out within a few years, all within customary practice and financial capacity.
- (3) To present plans embodying the principal needs of the area which would be more closely related to practicability and realisation than (1); wider and larger in vision than and yet embodying to whole of (2); and generally such as might reasonably be carried out over, say, twenty to twenty-five years by extended statutory powers at a cost not incommensurate with the benefits, direct and indirect, which should accrue.

In practical terms, the above approaches were studied with regard to their application to proposals especially concerning the use of land and the height of building zones, some special areas of the City, traffic and lastly matters of legislation, procedure and realisation. With regard to the use of land, uses were proposed for all of the unused land and for streets zoned for purposes most beneficial to several parts of the City. The purpose of zoning was to guide and stimulate desirable development, to deter the undesirable and to exclude the obnoxious. Four zones were suggested, for “Special Business”, for “General Business”, for “Commercial” use and, lastly, an “Undetermined” category, excluding all types of special industrial buildings and industrial building in general (Improvements and Town Planning Committee ITPC 1944, pp. 9–10).

At the same time, regarding the permitted height and coverage of buildings, the principles of the Corporation’s control, as then exercised, were adopted. The actual suggestions for the height of buildings could be summarised as follows (Improvements and Town Planning Committee ITPC 1944, p. 12):

- (1) Limitation of overall height to roof on top storey to the same extent as the London/building Acts, i.e., approximately 100 ft. throughout the City except in the St Paul’s area and over 100 ft. in exceptional cases by special consent and consultation with the London County Council as the authority for the London Building Area.
- (2) Limitation of street height of elevation from ground level to cornice (or wall-head) in relation to street width, and angular limit of set-back there above; there were two zones for this—(i) in the central area, where the sheer height permissible was twice the street width, with 63.5° setback, (ii) in the rest of the City, where the sheer height permissible was one and a half times the street width, with 56° set-back. In both cases, the 80-ft. cornice limit of the London Building Acts was effective. In the St Paul’s area, special cornice limits were defined.
- (3) Limitation of light-wells (whether enclosed on all sides or not) to an angle of 63.5° from first floor slab level throughout the City.

Meanwhile, the Corporation’s control of coverage of buildings as it was exercised until the end of the war could be tabulated as Table 13.1.

Table 13.1 The City of London Corporation's control of coverage of buildings

Commercial and all uses other than residential	Residential uses
Up to 16 ft above ground level, 100 %	Up to 40 ft above ground level, 50 %
From 16 to 40 ft, 90 %	From 40 to 60 ft, 45 %
From 40 ft to maximum height, 75 %	From 60 ft to maximum height, 40 %

Source Improvements and Town Planning Committee (ITPC) (1944), p. 13

With regard to the proposals for some special areas of the City, measures referring to the environment of St Paul's Cathedral and of the churches and other historic buildings were suggested. Especially, referring to St Paul's Cathedral, the Report recommended that in the future it should be less encompassed by buildings than it was, particularly on the south, east and west sides. The building lines should be defined so as to create a quiet formality, without forced symmetry, at sufficient distance to provide a larger forecourt in the west and a wider stretch of greensward surrounding the south and east. Moreover, the general form of the Ludgate Hill approach should be retained, subject to widening it to 80 ft in order that the full composition could be seen at a greater distance down the Hill. At the same time, a view of the total height should be obtained from both the north and the south opposite the porches under the dome; the south should be open from the River front by an appropriate treatment of the approach levels; additionally, the north should possess an approach for pedestrians. According to the Report, both these approaches demanded formal but subdued architectural treatment and careful selection of elevation materials.

Besides St Paul's Cathedral, the churches and other monuments of architectural and historic distinctions, such as Guildhall, the Mansion House, Halls of the Livery Companies, etc., were considered to be subject to reconstruction policy. Especially, the reconstruction of Guildhall and its offices was under the consideration of another Committee, but the Report expressed the view that, in whatever form it was ultimately effected, the site should have dignified approaches and a suitable environment (Improvements and Town Planning Committee ITPC 1944, pp. 16–18).

Even more, the proposed street improvements contained both a new circular route, 80 ft wide, intended to act partly as a by-pass and partly as a distributive road for through traffic including public service vehicles, and street widening within this ring whose effect would be to relieve congestion mainly in the western and more heavily damaged section of the City. The circular route consisted of two sections, the northern and the southern. The schemes for the northern section were: (i) from Aldersgate Street at its junction with Barbican; from Aldersgate Street passing generally along the site of Fore Street to Moorgate, (ii) an alternative proposal in the same general direction but passing on each side of the Church of St Giles, Cripplegate, and associated with a larger area of clearance to expose the line of London Wall. On the other hand, the southern section of the circular route continued the Victoria Embankment by passing under Blackfriars Bridge and proceeding eastwards under London Bridge to Tower Hill. Moreover, the northern and southern sections could be joined by an eastern arm between Aldgate and Tower

Hill, while a western arm consisted of the use of New Bridge Street and Farringdon Road with a junction at Blackfriars (Improvements and Town Planning Committee ITPC 1944, pp. 21–24). So, it was considered that the construction of a circular route would relieve the City of traffic.

Finally, as far as the legislative framework, work on the Forty plan for the City started under the regulations of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1932. However, the subsequent passing of the War Damage Acts of 1941 and of 1943, as well as of the Town and Country Planning (Interim Development) Act, 1943, gave further provisions and powers to the scheme and made it more effective. Especially, the latter Act enabled the Corporation, as the planning authority for the City, to postpone consideration of applications which could not be carried out immediately (Improvements and Town Planning Committee ITPC 1944, p. 28). But, what was the criticism which developed after the publication of the above City plan?

The reaction of Astragal (1944, pp. 96–97), the regular commentator of *A'J*, was a distinctive one. He pointed out on 10 August 1944, that after three whole years of hard work the Improvements and Town Planning Committee of the City of London could come to no decisions upon the surroundings of St Paul's, upon the extension of the Thames Embankment, upon the removal of the anachronistic meat and fish markets, upon the tidying up of the welter of main line terminal stations; all that it could say with conviction was that the City required a Ring Road and that many internal roads required widening. Furthermore, it was simply designed to restore the rateable values of the City to their pre-war position, to maintain them and to increase them. In the pre-war minds of its authors high rateable values were apparently dependent upon three things—extensive street frontages, terminal railway stations and wholesale markets; no provision was made for adequate open spaces, for through passenger traffic or for the removal of the wholesale markets because, obviously, every open space would reduce the amount of ground available for building and rating.

Obviously, this kind of criticism was harsh but it represented the timid character of the scheme's proposals. Apart from details and special sites, the five objectives of the scheme were (Editorial 1944, p. 95): (i) improvements in communication for all types of internal and by-pass traffic, (ii) improvements in typical commercial and office accommodation, (iii) improved services, (iv) improved settings for historic monuments and notable buildings and (v) improvements in amenity and recreation, which were unsuccessfully pursued.

However, as it was argued in the Editorial of *A'J* (1944, pp. 95–96), in matters of architecture and civic design it looked rather as if there was a willingness to do what is proper, but there was a lack of knowledge, technique and designing ability to demonstrate it. This latter point seems to be the explanation of the above features of the Forty plan for the City of London. Indeed, it emerges from a PRO document, dated on 18 February 1943, that the Ministry of Town and Country Planning had little confidence (PRO file HLG 71/117, "The Planning of London, letter..."), that the opportunities were to be seized or that there was any real planning concept behind the proposals. This judgment was based on the fact that the plan was under the guidance of the City Engineer, who they believed had not and could hardly be

expected to have the proper qualifications needed for a job of this kind; and although he had a planning officer, Mr. Lovett, who had done some extensive survey work, there were indications that he was being kept in the background.

Criticism of the Forty plan was also developed by the Royal Fine Art Commission. It pointed out that the proposed plans were mainly traffic-related, other considerations being secondary. They did not appear to envisage any marked improvements in the size, shape, and alignment of building blocks. Anyway, the Commission agreed in principle with the opinion expressed in the Forty Report that small open spaces were more suited to the use and character of the City than large ones (RFAC Royal Fine Art Commission (RFAC) 1945, pp. 198–199).

Nevertheless, the Forty plan for the City of London was rejected by the last Minister of Town and Country Planning in the National Government, WS Morrison, who argued that the scheme as it stood was mean and unimaginative, that even the elementary and basic requirements of convenient accommodation and good circulation had not been faced and that the obvious idea behind the proposals, of avoiding land purchase and interference with existing boundaries, was nothing less than a dominating negative (Editorial 1945, p. 111). The Minister also suggested that as the problem was of such national importance, its solution demanded the very best town planning advice (Astragal 1946, p. 22). Actually, the Corporation of the City of London was advised by the new Labour Minister, Lewis Silkin, in July, 1945 (PRO file HLG 71/1020) to make a fresh start and to discuss with him the appointment of consultants. This development had led to Dr. Holden and Professor Holford being invited to act as consultants and to proceed in the formulation of their recommendations for the City of London.

13.3 The Holden–Holford Plan for the City of London

After the turning down of the City Engineer's plan for the City, Professor William Holford, a distinguished architect and planner who also was Director of Research in the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, and Dr. Charles Holden, a senior architect who had the stature and the experience to command respect in the conservative City (Cherry and Penny 1986, p. 136), were appointed in 1945 by the Corporation of the City of London as consultants to prepare proposals for its re-planning.

In March 1946, they submitted their Interim Report to the Improvements and Town Planning Committee, and subsequently to the Court of Common Council on 17 July 1946 with the recommendation that it should be accepted in principle and as a basis on which the Final Plan and Report could be prepared for submission to the Minister (Anonymous 1946a, p. 43). Put very broadly, they recommended that the City should specialise in its own forms of accommodation, and maintain its reputation as a centre for the convenient transaction of business, while at the same time they recognised that the biggest problem in its re-planning was that of traffic congestion (Anonymous 1946b, pp. 43–49).

Especially, in this first stage of the plan they suggested that the total amount of accommodation to be aimed at should be as would provide for a day-time population of about 470,000, that is slightly less than in 1931, but at a generous standard of floor-space per person; it was also suggested that every office should be well lighted and ventilated, and circulation between offices should be made easier. Additionally, the consultants in referring to the traffic circulation task proposed that the road system should be designed to carry twice the pre-war volume of traffic. In order to meet this target, they recommended new roads in the war-damaged areas, widened roads in a distributive circuit around St Paul's and the Bank crossing, and placing of pavements under ground-floor arcades where new and undamaged frontages made widening impracticable. In this context, a special road was proposed to take traffic from Holborn Circus or from Gray's Inn Road, over Farringdon Street and the Central Markets, and then directly to Liverpool Street and Broad Street Stations, while Thames Street was proposed for substantial widening, to allow local through-traffic to move easily between Tower Hill and the Victoria Embankment (Fig. 13.1).

Referring to the use-zoning system for the City of London, the consultants suggested that the whole area, apart perhaps from the Inner and Middle Temples, St Bartholomew's Hospital and the historic buildings, had to be organised as the commercial zone of London. Other uses, whether residential or industrial, should require approval from the Corporation, even if they were essential to commercial operations. It was also noted that the uncontrolled spread of purely commercial buildings into adjacent areas, unless forming part of another and separate centre or sub-centre, was not a proceeding which the Corporation would wish to see encouraged by the adjacent Planning Authority whose territory surrounded them. Within this major commercial zone there were a large number of essential uses, as those of offices, public buildings, shops, etc.

Furthermore, the consultants had a general aim, first to establish three main zones: viz., an Office Zone, a Warehouse Zone and a Zone of Combined Office and Warehouse buildings together with a Special Building Zone; second, to suggest the appropriate ratio of floor-space to site area in each zone and the limits of variation above and below this overall figure, which would be appropriate to sub-divisions of the zone and to whole street blocks; third, to suggest a method by which uses ancillary to those of the two main zones (such as shops and institutions) could be admitted without discrimination in principle, but with reasonable control over individual applications (Anonymous 1946b, pp. 51–52).

As far as civic design, the consultants recognised three problems to be involved: the preservation or improvement of the settings of buildings of historic and architectural importance, the creation of opportunities for fine new buildings, and the maintenance of "character" in City architecture, blending the richness and diversity of buildings of all periods.

Referring to the first task, St Paul's Cathedral, was without question the most important monument. It was proposed to enlarge its "precinct" to the dimensions proposed by Wren and to preserve the Ludgate Hill approach, but to make the last

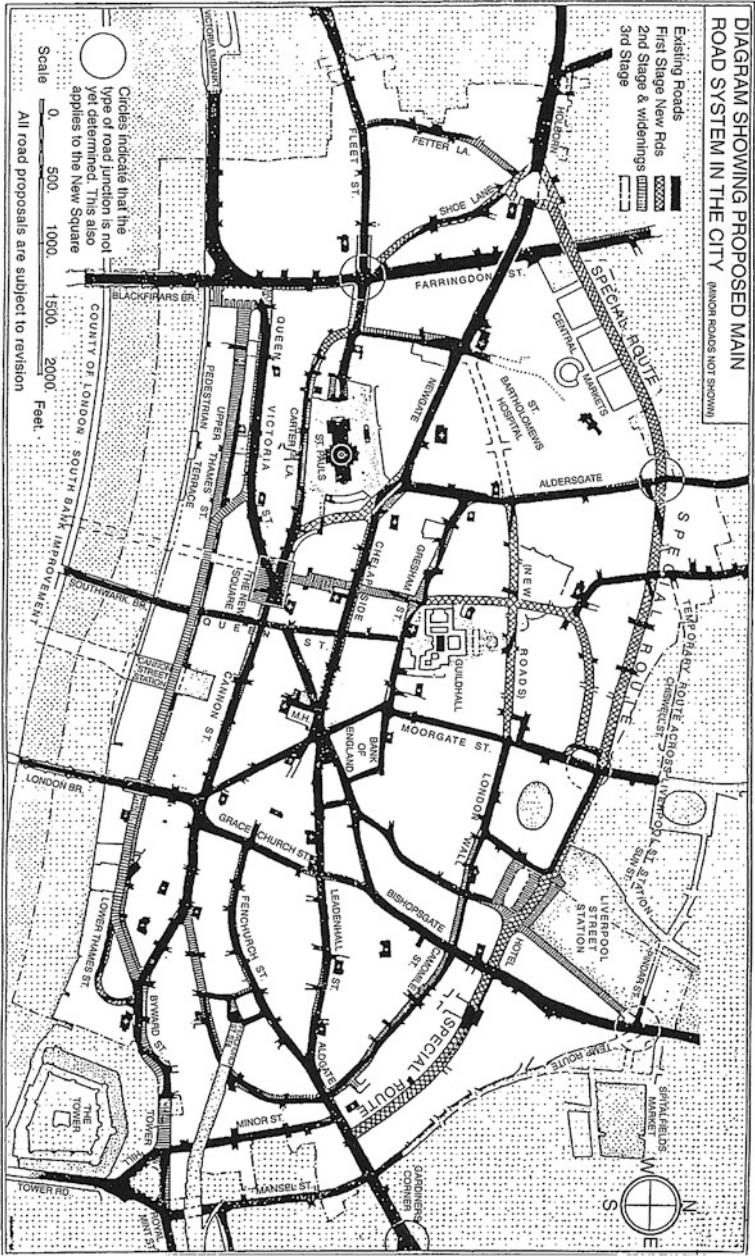


Fig. 13.1 The Holden–Holford plan for the City of London: the proposed main road system (Source Anonymous 1946a, p. 20)

part of it a ceremonial approach only, diverting bus traffic along Carter Lane. It was also suggested that the Tower should be within a precinct which included the Gardens, as proposed by the Tower Hill Improvement Trust; Guildhall should be rebuilt with the old hall retained against a background of modern building, comprising new offices, committee rooms and council chamber, and a civic hall available to the Livery Companies and others whose own premises had been destroyed by bombing; finally, the City churches should not be overwhelmed by new office buildings.

Concerning the creation of opportunities for fine new buildings, it would occur if the proposals were adopted at many places such as the New Square, which was suggested to be made at the crossing of Carter Lane, Queen Victoria Street and Cannon Street, as well as in the case of the buildings facing St Paul's. Finally, referring to the maintenance of character in City architecture, it was proposed that town planning control of floor-space access and day-lighting should be consistently operated and that in certain areas, e.g., around St Paul's, there should be an architectural control over the height and external appearance of buildings. It was argued that the redevelopment of whole blocks, or of property on both sides of a "corridor" street, should be contemporaneous.

As Astragal pointed out (1946, p. 22), Holden and Holford had interpreted their terms of reference liberally, and had cast their report not as a detailed criticism of the rejected City Engineer's plan, but in the form of new proposals. Actually, the new plan, besides the fact that its road proposals differed considerably from those suggested by the previous one, contained a two-stage programme for realisation of the recommendations; for example, the immediate construction programme for new main roads in areas of extensive war damage was referred, first to the new east-west link between Aldersgate and London Wall; second, to the new north-south relief road from Finsbury Pavement, alongside Guildhall across Gresham Street and Cheapside to Cannon Street; and third, to the New Street itself (Anonymous 1946b, pp. 49–50).

Furthermore, according to the authoritative biography of Holford, written by Cherry and Penny (1986, p. 137), another characteristic point of the consultants' suggestion was that while Abercrombie's London plans had called for a substantial dispersal of population and employment, Holden and Holford did not choose to recommend that the City contribute to this metropolitan exodus, but they argued that the decentralisation of population and industry did not necessarily involve any significant loss of population and industry and financial activities in which the City specialised.

In presenting the Interim Report, the Improvements and Town Planning Committee ITPC made certain observations to the Court of Common Council referring: first, to the road proposals, which in its view would have the effect of bisecting the market place of the Mincing Lane area; second, to the Upper Thames viaduct, which they did not like but preferred a street at ground level sufficient to accommodate all future requirements; third, to the St Paul's Cathedral environs, which they felt had not yet achieved the necessary finality in the proposals for treatment;

fourth, to the river front about which they were not convinced of the feasibility of the construction of the proposed high level riverside walk along the greater part of the front from Blackfriars to London Bridge. Finally, the Committee accepted the Interim Report of the consultants as a whole and recommended its approval (Anonymous 1946b, p. 54); this happened on 17 July 1946, when the Court of Common Council approved it in principle (Anonymous 1947, p. 425).

The Final Report on Reconstruction of the City of London was presented to the Improvements and Town Planning Committee ITPC of the Corporation by the joint planning consultants, Holden and Holford, in April 1947. Since the publication of the Interim Report, the planning climate had changed; it was due mainly to the fact that at that time the new Town and Country Planning Bill, which led to the establishment of the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947, was in the House of Commons. The problem was that the responsibilities of the City under the Bill with regard to the execution and direction of the plan would undergo great changes, the LCC taking over control (Editorial 1947, p. 423; Cherry and Penny 1986, p. 139). Indeed, according to Sub-Section 1 of Section 114 of the Town and Planning Act, 1947, that the local planning authority for the administrative County of London was defined as the London County Council. However, at the same time, matters such as those related, first, to the obligation to purchase land on refusal of permission in certain cases (1947 Act, Section 19), to orders for preservation of trees and woodlands (1947 Act, Section 28), to powers to expedite completion of compulsory acquisition of land for development (1947 Act, Section 39) and to default powers of Minister (1947 Act, Section 100), second, to the powers of a local authority to make agreements regulating development or use of land (1947 Act, Section 25), and third, to construction and improvement of private streets (1947 Act, Section 48), should be exercised in the case of land in the City of London by the Common Council of the City (Ministry of Town and Country Planning (MTCP) 1947a, pp. 129–132).

To turn to the proposals themselves, the consultants succeeded with great skill in finding solutions to the urgent traffic problems, attempting, at the same time, to preserve the character of the City and all its monuments. In addition to the road proposals, they had made two important contributions to town planning practice; especially to that referring to central area planning. The first contribution was their recommendations for the distribution of floor space throughout the City by a kind of density-control, and the conception of the *Standard Plot Ratio*, while the second one referred to the suggested new *Day-lighting Code*. What, then, were the main features of the above recommendations and the introduced innovations?

The Holden–Holford plan for the City of London was based on an inventory of accommodation provided in and immediately adjacent to the City in 1939. The pre-war floor space was calculated by dividing the whole area of the city into *street blocks*, these being groups of buildings surrounded by uncovered streets containing carriage ways (Fig. 13.2). The street blocks were measured in three ways (Holden and Holford 1951, p. 271):

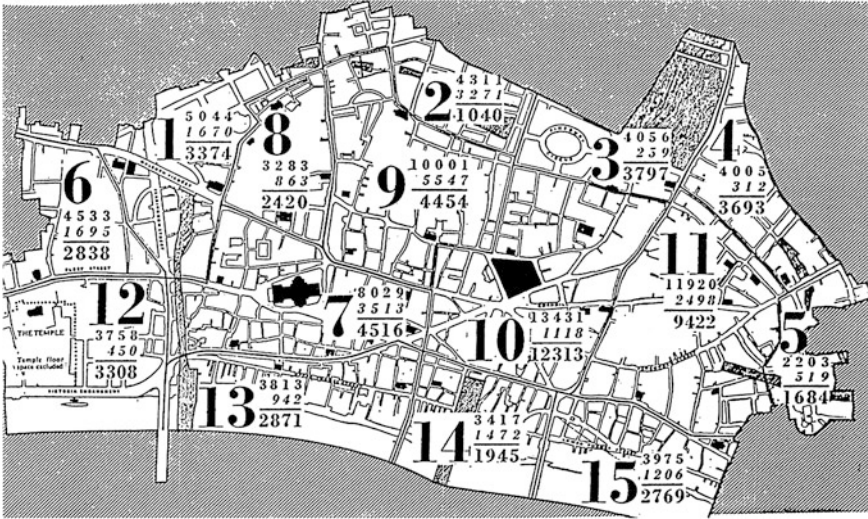


Fig. 13.2 The Holden–Holford plan for the City of London: Floor space in each section for 1939 and 1947 (in thousands of square feet). The final figures in bold type are the 1947 figures (Source Holden and Holford 1951, p. 303)

- (i) *Built-on Area*, this was land within the street that was covered by structures at ground floor level.
- (ii) *Block Area*, this was the area obtained by following round the external building line of the street block, cutting across any internal access-roads leading into the block.
- (iii) *Gross Area*, this was the Block Area, plus half the width of all surrounding streets.

Two useful indices were the outcome from these calculations: first, the *net ratio* of floor space obtained by dividing the total floor area by the Built-on Area, and second, the *floor space index*, obtained by dividing the total floor space by the Gross Area. It is apparent that the net ratio was of main concern to the owner and his architect, since it indicates the bulk and disposition of the building mass itself, while the floor space index was the town planner's measuring "rod" and enables him to suggest the right balance between accommodation and traffic, building and open space, concentration and spread.

Having the above indices as basic instruments, the consultants recommended (Holden and Holford 1951, pp. 301–302 and 304–305), that for the standard office block a maximum ratio of 5 to 1 should be established between the amount of floor space in a particular building or group of buildings and the area of the plot which the building owner is developing (Fig. 13.3).

Furthermore, relaxations enabling a ratio of up to 6 to 1 to be used were suggested for certain types of occupancy to meet special cases. A plot ratio of 5 had been found that would produce a floor space index of the corresponding Block as a

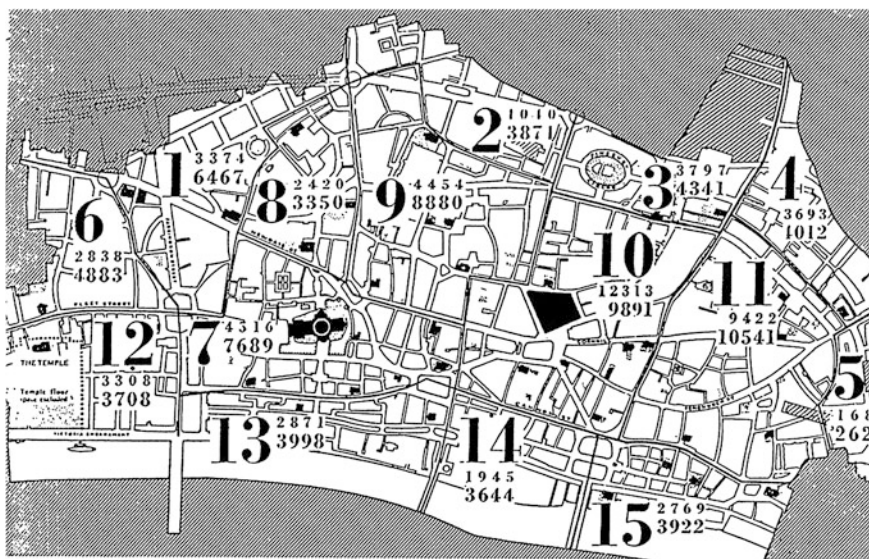


Fig. 13.3 The Holden–Holford plan for the City of London: Floor space in each section (shown in thousands of square feet) as in 1947 and, in bold type after redevelopment (Source Holden and Holford 1951, p. 304)

whole of about 3; certainly, in the cases where one of the plots was occupied by a church or some other building of low density, the average plot ratio was less than 5 and the corresponding index less than 3. As a consequence, the whole City consisting of 318 street blocks and assuming a plot ratio of 5 for new developments, had approximately an average plot ratio of 4.3 and a corresponding floor space index of 2.5. In total floor space terms, the City had an area of 85,750,000 square feet in 1939. It had been reduced by approximately a third to 59,000,000 in 1947 after the war destructions, and the future figure suggested was no more than 82,000,000. In addition, the target day-population figure for the City was set about 470,000 and this represented a reduction of 6 % on what was estimated as the peak figure before the war. Figures 13.2 and 13.3 show the total floor space in each section of the City in 1939 and in 1947, respectively, and the figures likely to be realised when all existing commercial plots have been developed, if the trends suggested in the Final Report and the recommended density control both came to pass. Criticising the value of the above system of floor calculations, Cherry and Penny (1986, p. 140) argued that the plot ratio provided one of the major devices whereby the City was prevented from turning into a miniature New York.

The day-lighting code suggested by the consultants took the form of Appendix C in their Final Report (Holden and Holford 1951, pp. 320–323). In practice, they recommended a revision of the City’s Draft Clauses on Height and Site Coverage, which had been devised before the war with the purposes of securing adequate daylight, ventilation and access for firefighting (Cherry and Penny 1986, p. 139). A

similar code has already been presented in Chap. 7 of this book. It appeared in the Advisory Handbook on *The Redevelopment of Central Areas* of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning (1947b, pp. 95–99) also in the form of Appendix 3. However, the day-lighting code introduced by Holden and Holford had a specific character appropriate to the particular problems which were concentrated in the case of the City of London.

Actually, the main difference between the proposed new City code and the existing height and set-back regulations might be summed up in the fact that the code recognised that it was not the amount of accommodation on a given area that controls the daylight reaching windows so much, as the arrangement of the accommodation. According to the code the proportion of well-lighted floor space in a building was almost wholly determined by the following five factors (Holden and Holford 1951, p. 321 and 323):

- i. Obstruction outside the windows.
- ii. Overall width of building block.
- iii. Height of the various floors above ground level.
- iv. Floor to floor height.
- v. Size and placing of windows.

Furthermore, it was argued that the relative importance of these various factors could be judged with tolerable accuracy by plotting the *No-sky-line* resulting under various conditions which already existed in City buildings or would exist under the code introduced. As *No-sky-line* was defined, the diagonal line running from window head to floor in most rooms, behind which no portion of the sky could be seen, and the depth of penetration of the *No-sky-line* into a room, were considered as a good guide to day-light conditions in it. Finally, the proposals of the new day-lighting code were based on the assumption that the density of accommodation in the City would in future be controlled in the manner contained in the main corpus of the Final Report, which among others included the norm that for the standard office block a maximum ratio of 5 to 1 should be established.

Introducing a very strong framework of intervention in the built environment by both of the above controls, the City's consultants went on to provide solutions to other town planning problems. The most urgent question which had to be faced was the City's road system. As it is well known, for centuries the City has had no adequate canalisation of traffic from east to west. With the growth of Westminster to the west, and the Stepney and Finsbury to the east and north, an enormous volume of through-traffic had been created, which was finding its way slowly through the medieval City routes. It has been calculated that in 1936 the average speed of a vehicle from Ludgate Circus to Aldgate was not much greater than walking pace (Holden and Holford 1951, pp. 56–57).

Anyway, this through-traffic, which had no business in the City as it was coming from and going to points at some distance from it, had to be catered for by improvements in the County plan as a whole. On the other hand, the activities and functions of the City itself were generating a lot of traffic congestion. As a consequence, the most southerly route, Thames Street, was blocked during part of the

day by Billingsgate traffic and other warehouse vehicles. The next route, consisting of Queen Victoria Street, Cannon Street and East Cheap, had difficult crossings at the Mansion House, which is the residence of the Lord Mayor, and London Bridge. The next west-east route, consisting of Holborn, Newgate, Cheapside, Cornhill, Leadenhall Street and Aldgate, was the most direct way through the City, and at the same time because of the narrowness of the road in some parts and the frequency of its crossings, the slowest. North of this cross-route there was practically no main thoroughfare going from West to East. Finally, the north-south routes all approached bridgeheads; the most important of them from the traffic point of view were those which crossed Blackfriars and London Bridges.

The two consultants, trying to find a solution to the above traffic problem, suggested both improvements of the existing routes and the construction of new ones. The improvements contained on the one hand interim remedies, as for example (Holden and Holford 1951, pp. 286–287): (i) the prohibition of standing vehicles on all the main routes, (ii) the maximum possible facilities for parking cars and public service vehicles off the public ways, (iii) the wider distribution of bus routes and the improvement of bus stations, (iv) the increased use of road studs and upright traffic signs to indicate lanes for particular streams of traffic, (v) the carrying on of loading and unloading operations and (vi) in some narrow thoroughfares arcading over the pavement was proposed as an interim stage in the perspective of street widening. On the other hand, they suggested measures for adding to pedestrian facilities including increased open spaces, as well as the linking up of these with sequence of shops or shopping centres, historic buildings and open viewpoints. In this category of improvements, they included some proposals referring to special traffic works concerning, for example, the sinking of the railway line at Blackfriars Bridge below ground leaving the existing level for local traffic, as well as the Liverpool Street and Broad Street approaches (Holden and Holford 1951, pp. 281 and 288–289).

In addition, two completely new roads were suggested for the City. The first of them was the road which links Gray’s Inn Road and Holborn with Liverpool Street, occupying two levels (Holden and Holford 1951, pp. 59–60): the existing ground level for turning traffic and an upper level which flew over Farringdon Street and other streets to take the through-traffic to Aldersgate, Moorgate and Liverpool Street. The other one was a two-level route at Thames Street; the lower level road was proposed to be used by the slow-moving vehicles coming to the wharves and warehouses and the upper level one by cars and lorries that would take the quicker moving office traffic and possibly some of the local through-traffic, which wanted to get quickly from the east to the west of the City and beyond (Fig. 13.4).

A second town planning problem, which received a radical solution in the consultants’ proposals, was that referring to the zoning of the City. They recommended that the City, excluding the Inner and Middle Temples, should be considered for all general zoning purposes as *one* zone.

In regard to “use zoning” also, the distinctions between “free-entry” and “permissive” areas for Special Business, General Business, Commercial and Undetermined Uses, was to be abolished, and in their place were to be indicated on the first

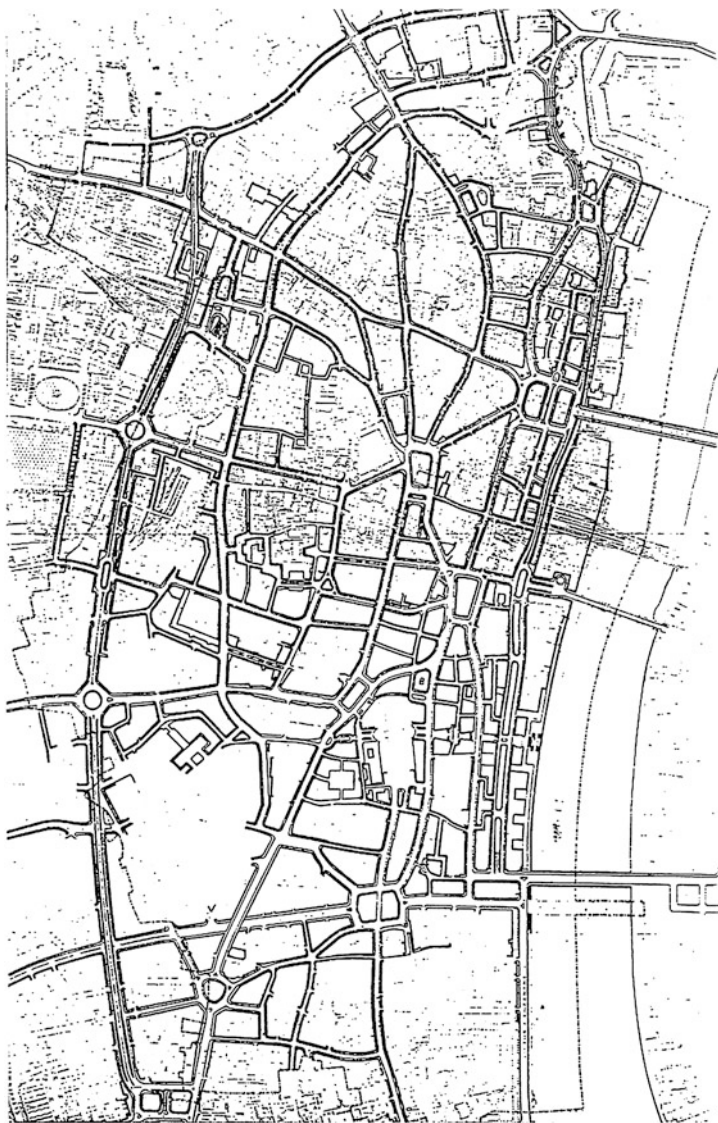


Fig. 13.4 The Holden–Holford plan for the City of London: the proposed long-term street plan 1947 (Source Holden and Holford 1951: facing p. 64)

development plan, and on the subsequent five-yearly revisions, those sections in which particular types of commercial user would be considered normal, those in which a special case would have to be made to secure normal status, and those in which a special case would have to be substantiated before planning permission was granted. Moreover, it was recommended that a General Zone be delineated

covering the area of the City, flanked by similar zones in certain parts of Westminster, Holborn, Finsbury and Stepney. This General Zone would cover all building uses grouped under the following headings (Holden and Holford 1951, pp. 290–293):

- i. *Residential buildings* (including hotels, hospitals, hostels and flats);
- ii. *Offices* (including banks and safe deposits, and also private canteens and luncheon clubs);
- iii. *Business premises* (including wholesale, warehouses, exchanges, salerooms, and workshops incidental to the business and not using mechanical plant);
- iv. *Shops* (including retail markets, post offices, public houses, bars, restaurants and ticket offices);
- v. *Public buildings and places of assembly* (including churches, chapels, clubs, Company Halls, fire and police stations, professional institutes, secondary schools, technical colleges, exhibition halls, theatres and public libraries);
- vi. *Storage warehouses* (including builders' and contractors' yards, cold stores, furniture depositories, and multi-storey garages);
- vii. *Light industrial buildings* (including those defined in Section 151 of the Factories Act, but having only electrically driven power-machinery establishments, and workshops for personal services);
- viii. *Petroleum filling stations*;
- ix. *Transport and public utility structures* (including bus and underground stations and depots, electricity sub-stations, telephone exchanges, pumping stations, water towers and accumulators, railway stations and yards);
- x. *Industrial buildings* (including large printing works and presses, garages and repair shops, breweries and factories requiring, however, special permission in the Inner Section);
- xi. *Dwelling houses* (including nursery schools, requiring also special permission in any Section of the City, except in the area which lay north of the line of Barbican-Beech Street-Chiswell Street);
- xii. *Special industrial buildings*, requiring permission;
- xiii. *Special Places of Resort* (including amusement galleries and Fun Fairs).

Apart from these proposals of a general character for the City, Holden and Holford recommended measures for certain areas of it as well. They deserve the term “precinct”, in that they have a character of their own, somewhat withdrawn from the run of commercial buildings and which had to be protected from major thoroughfares running through them. The most important of them should be considered the St Paul’s precinct and the Guildhall precinct.

The significance of St Paul’s Cathedral as a monument was not in question. Its escape from major damage by bombing and the fact that the Cathedral with its dome became during the war something of a symbol of resistance and survival created a very strong sentimental feeling among the planners which helped suggest the opening up of more space around the Cathedral and, on the other hand, the preservation of more extensive views of it than existed before the bombing (Holden and Holford 1951, p. 80).

As a result, in preparing the layout of St Paul's precinct, the following factors were brought under review by the consultants: first, the establishment of a ceremonial approach from Fleet Street, up Ludgate Hill; second, the need for an adequate forecourt, with a layby for vehicles during special functions; third, the diversion to Carter Lane of the main traffic stream and bus route from its existing close proximity to the west and south fronts of the Cathedral and the reduction of disturbance to the religious services; fourth, the opening up of the Churchyard on the south and east; fifth, the closing of the east side of the Churchyard to north-south traffic and making, at the same time, provision for that traffic to flow easily from Cannon Street to Newgate Street and St Martin's-le-Grand; sixth, the preservation of the best views of the Cathedral and its great dome, without making an excessive demand for open space; seventh, the maintenance and improvement in every way possible of the famous prospect of St Paul's from Bankside; and eighth, the dedication of some of the open space cleared by bombing as a memorial to the events of 1940–1945 and to the Cathedral's almost miraculous survival from destructions (Holden and Holford 1951, pp. 297–299). Especially, for the preservation of the very fine view of the Cathedral from the south-east, which continues all the way down Cannon Street, the authors of the plan proposed that no building whatever should occupy the ground between the Cathedral and Cannon Street and Carter Lane on the south, so that only the little church of St Augustine in Watling Street would remain as foil and foreground to the grass and trees, and possibly the building up of a low platform to include some actual debris from bomb damage as a memorial.

In regard to the Guildhall, which had lost its roof during the war, but whose walls with their monuments had survived and remained almost intact, it was suggested that it should be repaired and rebuilt and set as a kind of symbol in near surroundings (Holden and Holford 1951, p. 82). The rest of the Civic Centre at this place, apart from a few offices, had been destroyed and therefore the rebuilding of the Guildhall and its yard was considered as an essential part of City reconstruction. In that area, the Mansion House, which lies some way away from the Guildhall, was considered, according to the consultants view, as an associated building in the context of the Guildhall precinct. Both these buildings together with the surrounding offices, committee rooms, council chamber and some of the departments of the Corporation of City, which were dispersed in various parts, were proposed to be conveniently grouped in this place into a precinct (Holden and Holford 1951, p. 296).

The last important task contained in the Holden-Holford plan for the City was to establish the stages of its realisation and the legislative procedure which was to be followed. As regards the first task, the consultants in their report tried to envisage how much could actually be planned on the basis of fact, and how much must be planned as conjecture only. For this reason, the proposals were shown as divided into two parts. The first was a Ten-year Programme showing the main street improvements to be put in hand in that time and the areas of land which would either have to be acquired to be developed in the way proposed, or else re-developed by the owners in accordance with the plan. The second part was a nominal

Thirty-year Plan which demanded for its validity on the carrying out of major schemes, such as provision of new underground railways (Holden and Holford 1951, p. 91).

In this context, the earliest tentative Building Date for normal commercial buildings was proposed to be April 1949. It occurred because it had been assumed that little labour would be available for permanent commercial building at the outset, and that the optimum size of the building labour force might be expected to be reached in 1965. In detail, the two consultants' calculations had been as follows: in the first five years, that is, from 1949 to 1953, 28,000,000 cubic feet of building could be completed by a building labour force rising from 550 men, at the Building Date, to 3,000 men, at the end of this first period. On the assumption that the labour force for war-damaged and normal replacement combined climbs to 5,000 men by 1965, and that the optimum area and distribution of building sites was made available at any given time, the reconstruction proposals for the City as a whole would be realisable by 1975.

As far as the second task, the legislative procedure of the above plan was based on the assumption that the Improvements and Town Planning Committee would forward to the Minister an application for a Declaratory Order under the Town and Country Planning Act, 1944. It would be also supported by proposals for improvement in the recognition that this would be a step towards the eventual approval of a development plan under the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947, which was at that time under debate as a Bill in Parliament, including the designation of land subject to compulsory purchase, and any compulsory purchase orders already made. In recommending the areas suitable for designation for compulsory purchase, there were only two firm criteria for guidance: the first being the definition of areas of extensive war damage which required to be developed as a whole, and the other, the addition of other land, including areas of bad layout and obsolete development, required for the carrying out of essential planning improvements. In fact, these were the criteria for the Declaratory Areas under the Town and Country Planning Act, 1944 (Holden and Holford 1951, p. 308).

During the examination of the Holden-Holford proposals for the City of London, the following question has remained for answer referring to the planning strategy for the reconstruction of Central London: what were the main projects suggested within comprehensive re-planning, and how were these organised under the town planning legislative framework introduced in the 1940s and 1950s? This issue will be the objective of Chap. 14.

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Chapter 14

Comprehensive Projects for Central London

Abstract The examination of the features of the various reconstruction projects of comprehensive character, which were implemented in the Central London area mainly in the 1950s, is the object of this chapter. The suggested proposals for rebuilding the Comprehensive Development Areas having central use character, that is, in the projects of St Paul's Precinct and Barbican, which are included in the boundaries of City of London, as well as in South Bank and Elephant and Castle, which belong to the poorer southern part of London's central district to the south of the Thames are analysed. The latter reminds us of the unsuccessful endeavours of the post-war architects and planners to connect sufficiently the "poorer" south and the "richer" north parts of Central London, on the two banks of the Thames.

It became apparent in the previous chapters that the sudden clearing away of large built-up areas of the British towns caused by the blitz was followed by systematic work at the legislative and planning level. However, very soon in those reconstruction years, the possibility of the application of the above measures was tested in special projects, which were undertaken in specific areas of the damaged towns. In London, and especially in its central area, there were extensive areas destroyed by the enemy action, which became object to the preparation of three-dimensional schemes. It stated that about 100 areas stood in need of comprehensive treatment. But in fact, owing to the financial liability likely to be incurred, only eight most urgent of them were selected to be dealt with as Comprehensive Development Areas, as follows (Johnson-Marshall 1966, pp. 178–193) Stepney-Poplar, Bermondsey, South Bank, Elephant and Castle, Bunhill Fields, Barbican, St Paul's Precinct and Tower of London.

Examining the suggested proposals for rebuilding these areas, an analysis will follow of those of the above Comprehensive Development Areas having central use character; that is, in the projects of St Paul's Precinct and Barbican, which are included in the boundaries of City of London, as well as in South Bank, and Elephant and Castle, which belong to the poorer southern part of London's central district to the south of the Thames.

14.1 The St Paul's Precinct Project

Although the Advisory Plan for the whole of the City, proposed by Holden and Holford in 1947 (see Chap. 12, c) had been approved in principle, the Town and Country Planning Act 1947, caused a significant delay, because the Advisory Plan proposals had to be incorporated in the Development Plan for the County of London, which, however, had not been submitted to the Minister until 1953. In approving the Administrative County of London Development Plan, the Minister of Housing and Local Government, Duncan Sandys, made certain modifications, one of which was the withdrawal of the area surrounding St Paul's on the ground that it should be studied afresh in order to provide a worthy setting for the Cathedral (Holford 1956a, p. 60).

It was in March 1955, when Sir William Holford, who had recently retired from his position as consultant for the City of London Corporation, told the Corporation's Improvements and Town Planning Committee that he "will be honoured to undertake the preparation of a scheme" for St Paul's Precinct. The Committee, which had asked Holford for his views on this matter, made its recommendations to the Court of Common Council at the end of the same month (March) (Anonymous 1955a, p. 427), and subsequently asked the Minister if he would agree to his appointment as their consultant with terms of reference to prepare a detailed scheme for the immediate precincts, and to advise them on their architectural policy with regard to all buildings coming within the orbit of the dome of St Paul's Cathedral (Holford 1956a, p. 60). The Minister approved the suggestion and Holford started work on 1 April, 1955, under the guidance of an Advisory Committee consisting of the Minister and the Chairman of the City Improvements and Town Planning Committee and the LCC Town Planning Committee (Wilson 1956, p. 10).

As Wilson informs us (1956, p. 10), various architects and others attended meetings of the Committee and one could appreciate his comment that "their opinions varied considerably". However, by the end of September 1955 the Committee had listed a number of points to be considered by the consultant. Subsequently, Holford submitted his report to the Corporation in time for the meeting of the Court of Common Council on 22 March, 1956. Examining Holford's (1956a, pp. 66–73) report on St Paul's Precinct, we could summarise the basic elements of the scheme as follows. It had four objects: first, to justify public expenditure on clearing ground near the Cathedral, putting a term to the life of existing buildings and erecting new ones by the creation of a precinct with a character of its own, as well as an impressive centre of pilgrimage and a national monument; second, to establish a system of circulation in and around the precinct for pedestrians and vehicles; third, to make provision for new accommodation for a variety of uses, including offices, warehouses, shops, public buildings and some dwellings and fourth, to devise a programme of development, starting with the sites already cleared on which building could proceed immediately, making allowance for traffic improvements.

Moreover, four principles of design were adopted as well for achieving the “worthy setting” of the area surrounding St Paul's. The first one was the *contrast* of the adjacent buildings to Wren's Cathedral, than from attempts at harmony of scale or other architectural features. The second principle was the *moving viewpoints* rather than the fixed ones, as, although St Paul's Cathedral was a symmetrical building about its east–west axis, the setting of its surrounding area was not axial at any point. The third principle was the adoption of *rectangularity* in the setting of the surroundings to the Cathedral in order that the first principle of the contrast be achieved; and even more although Holford himself had adopted a semicircular forecourt in a model made in 1955 (Anonymous 1956a, p. 300). Finally, the fourth principle was that of a *varied sky-line*, which would be the result of the entirely contrary principle of more open planning, in comparison with the existing one, with blocks of different height. As Holford argued (1956a, pp. 71 and 73), it thus permitted a less congested layout offering, at the same time, view through and between the taller buildings to the many interesting silhouettes of trees, towers, spires and domes in which this area was already rich. By using the latter principle, Holford suggested that the measures recommended in the Holden-Holford plan for the City of London in 1947, and in order to protect the southern views of St Paul's Cathedral, they should stand subject to an allowance for minor towers and architectural features. While, additionally, he proposed that outside this area of specific height restriction, locations of new building could be divided into the following two categories: (i) those which formed part of a view of historic or scenic importance, seen from a view point to which the public could have access and (ii) those in situations where no interesting view of St Paul's would be prejudiced by a high new building, and also where a high building was part of the desired architectural composition of an area of comprehensive development.

Describing Holford's proposals for St Paul's Precinct, the scheme had been conceived in three dimensions and was essentially a detailed design, specifying site areas and volumes for groups of buildings surrounding the Cathedral and enclosing a series of related open spaces at varying levels. These spaces consisted of the forecourt at the west end of the Cathedral with the approach from Ludgate Hill flanked by two office buildings (Holford 1956a, pp. 74–83), the Paternoster Square approached by steps from the forecourt and planned with two lower floors of car parking, Stonemason's Yard approached from the forecourt through Temple Bar and with the existing Chapter House on the north, the existing garden between the Cathedral and Cheapside, the space at the east end of the Cathedral at the side of the existing St Paul's Church Yard flanked by the proposed building for the Choir School incorporating the tower of St Augustine's church and lastly the great lawn on the south side between the Cathedral and Cannon Street.

Holford (1956a, pp. 91–92), concluding his proposals, emphasised that he tried to keep the buildings diagrammatic in his plans and not the expressions of a personal taste and preference, and as a consequence would not look upon them as architectural designs in the full sense. He also argued that there was a complete design behind the scheme as a whole, and it could be recognised in the form of the related open spaces between the buildings and around the Cathedral, rather than in

the form of the individual structures, as these spaces made the setting for St Paul's and the scheme would stand or fall accordingly whether they were effective or otherwise.

The same objective was again justified by Holford in late 1956, when he wrote (1956b, p. 214):

[...] The Precinct is not in itself a purely architectural design, since the architectural centrepiece is there already, and in a form which cannot be simply extended or repeated. What is needed is a frame or setting. At the same time it is something more than "an area of comprehensive development", in terms of the Act. It has to have architectural unity, even if the setting is a foil or contrast to the object it frames. It has therefore been a basic principle of the design to maintain a consistent character, scale and module throughout, from the walls of the buildings to the units of paving, and from the largest open space to the smallest. This unity is carried through the choice of materials and street furniture, the services (such as heating, cleaning and maintenance), the provision of car parking and loading space, and the planting of grass and trees. Like the Rockefeller Centre in New York the whole Precinct is conceived as a single urban estate—and not a very large one either [...].

The proposals of Holford for St Paul's Precinct received fairly wide publicity. After the Press Conference given on 16 March 1956, most of the newspapers and weekly magazines carried notices, all of them illustrated by photographs of the model or by specially commissioned line drawings. The critiques of CH Aslin, Hugh Casson and Patrick Abercrombie in *The Sunday Times*, of Furneaux Jordan in the *Observer*, of Myles Wright in the *Manchester Guardian* and of the architectural correspondent in *The Times*, were in favour of Holford's proposals at least, as they pointed out, for the good quantities inherent in them (Editorial 1956, p. 301). Analogous was the criticism of Astragal and of Hugh Wilson (1956, pp. 10–13). Astragal, especially, supported that (1956, pp. 281–282) Holford, although his fame was deservedly international, had not had any comparable schemes to design to such detail, and everyone would admit that he had risen to the occasion admirably. No site was more important and few could have done as well. The Minister of Housing and Local Government, Duncan Sandys, should feel singularly satisfied with the proposals for new London, which, by his action, he had caused to be designed. At the same time, Wilson (1956, pp. 10–13) writes in support that Sir William Holford had succeeded in creating a design in the English tradition, which was a fine example of the art of townscape and also a very practical solution of the problems which arise in the rebuilding of a most valuable site, economically, visually and historically, in the City of London.

However, in spite of the above atmosphere of general acceptance of Holford's proposals for St Paul's Precinct, there was also the voice of Sir Albert Richardson who opposed to these aspects. He supported that (Editorial 1956, p. 301) the contrast between the magnificence of St Paul's and the commercial treatment proposed for the surroundings was very strong. Additionally, Sir Albert Richardson believed that the correct solution would be a wonderful framework that would be more than respectful to St Paul's and it would be reverential. Richardson's view was a significant counter-argument, which would receive growing support in the 1960s and 1970s and it was one of the few predictive voices in those years, when the ideas of

Fig. 14.1 St Paul's Cathedral's entrance and the new buildings after the recent reconstruction. (Photo the author, January 2014)



modernism were widely spread in the British scene and which were favoured in the policy-making circles as well. Actually, the Minister of Works, Eccles (1954, p. 64), in his annual message to *AJ* in January 1954, stated that gradually it became possible to free more kinds of building from control, and to make a serious start on many large projects, such as the office blocks in the City of London. He hoped that building-owners would call for modern architecture and decoration. He believed that his generation wanted a style of its own and from what he had seen since he came to the Ministry of Works, if the architects were given the chance they would create such a style, worthy of the past and expressive of the new reign.

Even though, the way of implementation of modernism in the post-war era is considered nowadays as that which contributed effectively to the “inhuman” formulation of the built environment and the future of Paternoster Square next to St Paul's Cathedral is, according to the Prince of Wales's view (1989, p. 26), central to the argument between modernist and traditional architecture, or as he would rather put it, the argument between the inhuman and the human. It is a fact that although Holford's concept for St Paul's Precinct was entirely valid in town planning terms, however, it was very poor regarded from the aesthetic point of view. Indeed, the architectural result of Holford's proposals could not be considered inspiring, even in the context of Modern Architecture itself. This was the reason that led to the drastic redevelopment of the surroundings of St Paul's Cathedral recently, with the demolishing of the previous buildings and the construction of new ones aesthetically compatible with the monument (Fig. 14.1). An interesting episode of this procedure was the removal and reconstruction of the Temple Bar designed by Sir Christopher Wren in the area in November 2004.

14.2 The Barbican Project

The largest scheme, which had been defined as an Area of Comprehensive Development within the City of London and was part of the approved County of London Development Plan, was the heavily bombed Barbican area. This area was

the centre of the rag trade in the City of London (Marriott 1967, p. 69) and it was situated north of the Guildhall, between Aldersgate and Barbican Station on the west, and bounded on the east by Moorgate Station. It covered a space of approximately 40 acres of the Development Plan (Johnson-Marshall 1966, p. 189). All the buildings of this area had been destroyed by the enemy bombardment on the nights of 26 and 27 December 1940. The only historic structures which had survived there were the medieval church of St Giles and sections of the Roman wall (Cantacuzino 1973, p. 68).

As Percy Johnson-Marshall pointed out (1966, pp. 190 and 266), one of the great difficulties in regard to the three-dimensional scheme for the Barbican was the reluctance of the City Corporation, which was the potential land owner, to accept such a scheme at all. He informs us, that it was in fact only after the submission of a project prepared for a private group by the architects Sergei Kadleigh, William Whitfield and Patrick Hosbrugh in 1954 and the ensuing Public Enquiry, that it became obvious that there would have to be an official project.

But, which were the main features of the above proposed scheme?

The architects were instructed by the New Barbican Committee, a private group (Johnson-Marshall 1966, p. 266) chaired by Sir Gerald Barry, on 28 July 1954, to investigate and prepare an outline project for a comprehensive development of the blitzed area. In doing so, among other things, they were expected to keep the following main aims in view (Kadleigh et al. 1954, p. 458): (i) to develop the site as a complete whole, and to provide accommodation for a variety of uses all urgently needed in the City, (ii) to relieve traffic congestion by providing adequate parking facilities for vehicles on a realistic scale, (iii) to respect the historical associations, traditions and monuments of the City, (iv) to provide gardens and open space with trees and plants, (v) to achieve a form of development which would pay its own way and constitute a reliable investment and (vi) to create buildings in a form worthy of the finest City monuments, not by a slavish copy of their outward form or “style”, nor by an equally thoughtless use of a “modern style”, but by expressing in contemporary materials, and in the service of contemporary necessities, the essential character of the City.

The architects in their project rejected the form of “piecemeal” sporadic development of the site and adopted the principle to develop it as a fully comprehensive scheme. As an outcome, the Barbican eventually became the biggest single inner-city rebuilding project ever undertaken by a public authority in post-war Britain (Tsubaki 2012, p. 525). A full account of the implementation stage of Barbican project is given in the book of Heathcote (2004). Examining the project of the architects, it was suggested to excavate large areas on either side of the existing railway lines that is the Metropolitan Railway and two tracks of British Railways, to a depth of some 60 feet. The historical monuments—the Roman wall and St Giles’ church—were excluded from the excavated area so that they could be preserved in the open setting of a park. The excavated area was proposed to be filled with four floors of fully equipped warehouse accommodation served by its own road system and having access to the railway by means of new sidings. Additionally, car parking

for at least 3,000 vehicles could be provided within this area (Kaldeigh et al. 1954, pp. 459–461 and 463).

At ground level, the unexcavated area forming the historical centre with the remains of the Roman wall, St Giles church and the old graveyard was to become a park extending to form about seven acres of open space through the site joining Route 11, a six-lane highway proposed in the Holden-Holford plan for the City in 1947 (Johnson-Marshall 1966, p. 265).

Above ground level, it was proposed to build three floors of warehouse or industrial accommodation; this accommodation formed three large terraces north of Route 11, which also contained perimeter offices, while south of Route 11, the blocks were all offices with arcaded shops. The top surfaces of all these blocks were linked together by bridges and formed a continuous terrace some 45 to 50 feet above ground level. On this raised residential level, served by road, escalators and lifts, it was proposed to build four-storey maisonettes. Additionally, there would be local shops, restaurants, public houses, cinema, etc., and also schools and play-grounds for resident children.

Rising up above the residential area, it was proposed that there should be five tall blocks of offices of varying heights. The top levels of these office blocks would be high-grade residential flats making use of the roof gardens on top of the offices adjoining them, served by express lifts by-passing the office levels. It was lastly proposed that the site should be heated by means of a district heating system (Kaldeigh et al. 1954, pp. 465–466).

Summarising the presentation of the first scheme suggested for the Barbican area, it was a coherent project from the “total planning” point of view. However, when it went before the Court of Common Council of the City Corporation it was rejected. It happened in December 1954 (Anonymous 1954a, p. 670). In fact, the Council had approved the reports of its Improvements and Town Planning Committee, which included the following points of criticism made by the City Planning Officer: the project introduced such a large volume of industrial uses that the result would be contrary to the provisions of the County of London Development Plan in which the area was zoned for commerce and not for industry; furthermore, no attempt had been made to comply with planning standards as, for example, those for natural light; moreover, there was no evidence that consideration had been given to the economic aspect of the matter; and finally, the acceptance of the proposals for acquisition of the remainder of the site, as would be necessary, would be contrary to the Corporation’s present policy (Marriott 1967, p. 69). Actually, they did not want to take further land into public ownership, although, as Oliver Marriott informs us, before 1951 “the City was busy acquiring large tracts of land under its new powers of compulsory purchase” (Anonymous 1954b, p. 701).

Besides the Kadleigh, Whitfields and Horsbrugh project for New Barbican, two official proposals had been produced for the comprehensive planning of this area: one by the LCC and the other by the City Corporation. The first of them, which had been prepared by Arthur Ling’s LCC planning division under the direction of Dr. Leslie Martin (Editorial 1955, p. 459), was especially interesting. Six-storey maisonettes were proposed, grouped around the church of St Giles, with shops

underneath, providing a residential area. Other blocks were proposed largely for commercial use and there were two point blocks for office uses (Anonymous 1955b, p. 466). The second scheme had been prepared by William Holford in collaboration with Anthony Mealand, the Planning Officer of the City Corporation. In this scheme, five office blocks were proposed to run parallel with Route 11 and a closer development of blocks for offices and commerce was planned. Furthermore, the above, 20-storey point blocks for offices were sited in similar positions to those in the LCC's scheme, while some blocks of flats were introduced on the far side of St Giles' church (Anonymous 1955b, p. 466).

Both of the above schemes did not have the imaginative character in architectural terms of the first one. However, they had the merit of recognising the need for some overall scheme at the political level, although with the Government's lifting of the ban on office building, developers were beginning to submit proposals haphazardly throughout the area (Johnson-Marshall 1966, p. 190). This latter became apparent as a need after Macmillan lifted the development charge in 1953 and Birch the building controls in 1954, and the space granted planning permission by the LCC jumped from 2,400,000 square feet of space in 1952 to 3,000,000 in 1953, and 5,700,000 and 5,900,000 in 1954 and 1955, respectively (Marriot 1967, pp. 5–6). As a consequence, although the City of London had reduced the Redevelopment Area from the one discussed in the war (Johnson-Marshall 1966, p. 189), the public opinion in London had expected and favoured a comprehensive, planned development of Barbican; to this direction many journalistic projects published in the press since 1950, which were liked by the public, had effectively contributed.

At the request of the Corporation of City of London, another project was ready for the Barbican area in 1956, prepared by a private firm of architects (Chamberlin, Powell and Bon). At this point, it becomes necessary to recall that the architects' first project submitted in 1955, approached the design of the low buildings in a fundamentally different way to the one built, owing to the criticism for the Barbican development published by Cantacuzino (1973, pp. 69–70). Indeed, it consisted of a chequeboard of four-storey housing around alternative private and public courts. The project was rejected by the LCC on planning grounds, because of its excessively high density and lack of clear open space (Cantacuzino 1973, p. 70). Afterwards, they had been invited to prepare a scheme for the residential area, as the Barbican area was divided into two parts: a commercial zone of 28 acres and a residential area for over 6,000 people. Very soon, they saw that the area could be enlarged to great advantage and suggested to include the proposed commercial development to the west. As Johnson-Marshall pointed out (1966, pp. 190–191), although negotiations for the use of this site had already taken place, the Corporation eventually accepted the change of use, and thus gave the opportunity of preparing a much better project for the residential neighbourhood.

As Cantacuzino supported (1973, p. 68), in so far as the Barbican plan introduced a residential pocket into a predominantly commercial area it broke away from the strict zoning of the CIAM's Athens Charter and the "functional city" which it envisaged, and reflected the mood of the 1950s, which first sensed the improvement of urban life that would result from the abolition of rigid segregation of housing,

offices, recreation, transportation, etc. But, what were the main features of the Chamberlin-Powel-Bon plan for the Barbican area?

The project proposed housing between 6,000 and 7,000 people in 2,355 flats in an area of about 30 acres. The plot ratio of the scheme was 3.5:1 instead of the proposed 5:1 in the Holden-Holford plan for the City and retained in the Development Plan of 1951 (Johnson-Marshall 1966, p. 191); the density was calculated to be 300 people to the acre. Additionally, it proposed new buildings for the City of London School, the City of London School for Girls, the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, 1,840 garage places, a restaurant, three public houses, a concert hall and theatre (each seating 700 persons), an art gallery, a conservatory and various playgrounds, walks and ornamental water.

In architectural terms, the suggested buildings formed a series of inter-connecting courts, with vertical emphasis provided by 330-storey residential tower-blocks running approximately parallel to the axis of the four towers of offices which were proposed for the north side of Route 11. In the centre the schools, with the theatre, concert hall and art gallery, formed the four sides of a court, in which a pavilion was proposed containing the Lord Mayor's coach. To the north of this court, beyond a strip of ornamental water, was an open-air stage and arena. The semicircular building beyond consisted of six storeys of single and two-room flats. Below the flats, and below part of the arena, were two floors of garages. East of the arena, the ornamental water extended into a court formed by seven storeys of maisonettes over two storeys of garages. Down the centre of the court was a Broad Walk, which formed a central pedestrian spine for the whole scheme. A cross-axis had been formed at the east of this walk, consisting of an evergreen labyrinth, a glass pyramid-shaped conservatory and a fountain and cascade descending from the canal to form a pool around the conservatory. Flanking the east and west sides of the central quadrangle were paved areas which faced classrooms, school halls, and, on the east, an eight-storey block of maisonettes and flats. To the south of the quadrangle was the St Giles' church, its churchyard and a running track. Enclosing the latter was another court consisting of a continuous line of seven, eight and nine-storeys of maisonettes and flats. Above the Barbican, to the north, was a further area of offices and flats as well. Simultaneously, the existing roads between Fore Street and the Barbican had been closed and the whole area was proposed as a pedestrian precinct, with its own restaurant, shops and open space (Anonymous 1956c, pp. 632–636).

The above scheme was approved after many discussions with both LCC and City Corporation planners. However, its execution was delayed, due to one or two controversial aspects of its design. One aspect was that it involved moving a stretch of the Metropolitan Railway, and another was the proposal to provide a large number of flats with internal kitchens, i.e. they were not naturally ventilated, to which the LCC members took strong objection (Johnson-Marshall 1966, p. 191).

Furthermore, by 1968 the plans for a full-blown arts centre were approved, including a theatre for the Royal Shakespeare Company, a concert hall for the London Symphony Orchestra, a public library, an art gallery, a small cinema, restaurants, bars and shops (Cantacuzino 1973, p. 68). Finally, the project, after some revisions, was built in late 1970s, although there were facilities which were

Fig. 14.2 The Barbican development. (Photo the author, January 2014)



almost ready, as for example four of the group of six office towers around Route 11 (Johnson-Marshall 1966, p. 270) (Fig. 14.2).

As Johnson-Marshall argues (1966, p. 191), probably the most important contribution of the Barbican development was to illustrate the new principle of pedestrian segregation as applied to a commercial area. Meanwhile, Cantacuzino (1973, p. 69), in considering the built form which the Barbican finally took, argued that two complementary influences might be taken into account; on the one hand there were Le Corbusier's prewar projects and certain precepts of the Modern Movement as a whole; on the other, growing dissatisfaction with the Modern Movement was making architects look increasingly at earlier historical models. Finally, Marriott argues (1967, p. 70) that the Barbican project, with its 44 storey blocks of flats, Guildhall School of Music and new concert hall for the London Symphony Orchestra, was one of the biggest comprehensive schemes in Western Europe, and one of the most progressive.

All of these views about the architectural value of the Barbican project are giving us the real dimensions of its contribution in the rebuilding of post-war Central London and London in general. Indeed, it was an imaginative and bold architectural solution in harmony with the ideas of that era, although it was an outcome of compromise between the LCC and the City of London planning authorities.

14.3 The South Bank Project

It had been recognised that the section of the South Bank of the Thames, between Vauxhall and Southwark Bridges, was overdue for redevelopment. It was not until 1905 that the LCC decided to acquire an extensive riverside site for its offices. In order to carry out its intention, it required two private Acts (of 1906 and 1909). In 1909 work began on the river wall and the County Hall (Marmaras 1997, p. 12). However, this was interrupted by the First World War and the County Hall was not opened until 1922. Another 11 years passed before the northern section was

completed. In the years between 1933 and the beginning of the Second World War, the LCC made several attempts to acquire land between the County Hall and Hungerford Bridge. The first purchase, and that by agreement early in 1940, was of the land north of India Stores (Stephenson 1954, pp. 1–7).

It was during the Second World War that ideas about the South Bank began to crystallise. At the end of 1941, the LCC received a deputation from the Royal Philharmonic Society about a concert hall. The earliest conference with the National Theatre Committee took place in 1943, a month before the publication of the County of London plan. As a consequence, the first comprehensive scheme for this area was illustrated and described in the Forshaw-Abercrombie Report (1943, pp. 130–135). According to this Report, a complete and splendid renewal of the reaches between the County Hall and Southwark Cathedral was proposed (Fig. 11.4). It was to be carried out by high-density frontage development of office building or housing behind a new river wall. The general intention was that the whole of this river frontage should be laid out with new buildings for public, cultural, office and commercial purposes, together with provision for public open space and improved roads, to give the South Bank a character and appearance that would worthily match that of the North Bank (PRO file HLG 71/1575 (1952) “Redevelopment of the South Bank...”, p.1). So, how did the above policy decisions on components of the South Bank site redevelopment relate to the corresponding situation in town planning terms?

Immediately after the war, the LCC, which had the great advantage of owing all the land, was advancing rapidly along the broad lines indicated by the County of London plan, in which the South Bank was proposed as the southward extension of the central area of London. In this context, the proposals intended to improve traffic conditions, to allocate areas for central and local government purposes and for cultural, office, commercial and industrial uses, and to provide open space combined with an extension of the river wall, with public buildings as the background (Johnson-Marshall 1966, p. 182). The whole area could be roughly divided into five sectors: Albert Embankment, St Thomas’s Hospital precinct, the Permanent Development Scheme including County Hall, the area between Waterloo and Blackfriars Bridges and Bankside, between Blackfriars and Southwark Bridges. It is apparent, that the total length of the South Bank runs from Vauxhall Bridge right down to Southwark Bridge, but, thanks to the Festival of Britain, 1951, the sector between County Hall and Waterloo Bridge was the sector in which comprehensive central-area planning was concentrated. Actually, the Festival of Britain, 1951, prompted a number of proposals and attempts that had, as a result, the permanent comprehensive development scheme which was implemented in the South Bank.

In October 1948 Gerald Barry,¹ Director of the Festival, announced that the theme in 1951 would be Britain’s contribution to civilisation. As a consequence, the central exhibition was not intended to be a trade fair, so the British Industries Fair of 1951 would be complementary to the exhibition and not competitive. The Festival’s

¹ Gerald Barry was a leading Labour politician and one of the founding members of the Political and Economic Planning group (Hollow 2012, p. 576).

aim was to tell the story of British life, to offer a coherent and imaginative picture of British achievement past, present and to come, and of its contributions to the thought and action of the world. In this context, the most interesting point about this project was that the demonstration buildings would all be completed when the exhibition was over, and the entire neighbourhood then handed over for normal and permanent occupation. Though the site was not yet settled at that time, it was proposed to be chosen from among the redevelopment areas scheduled in the County of London plan, making use of bombed sites as near to the centre of London as was practicable. The Festival cost over £11,000,000 and brought together the expertise of architects, industrial designers, politicians, artists and scientists in a vision for a modern and socially progressive future (Hollow 2012, p. 576).

A Presentation Panel had been appointed under the chairmanship of Cecil Cook, the Director of Exhibition, with overall responsibility for the design of the Exhibition as a whole.² As Conekin supported (2003, p. 4), a strong emphasis on good design, with science and planning evoked as the “answer to the question of how to build a better Britain”. Actually, since 1946, Misha Black plumping for the South Bank as a site for housing the 1951 Exhibition, imagined an architectural composition in space, a fabulous steel and glass “mountain” topped with a helicopter tower, which contained suspended within its ribs hundreds of pavilions and attractions linked by ramps and winding waterways (Astragal 1946b, p. 445). By August, 1948, the Presentation Panel had been convinced that the South Bank site seemed to be an almost certain bet for 1951 Exhibition (Casson 1950, p. 372).

Nevertheless, as the days went by increasing complications appeared. Half the site, it seemed, was on lease to the Ministry of Works, who were about to start work on an office block. On the other half, the LCC started to prepare plans for the immediate redevelopment of the area between County Hall, Waterloo Bridge, the river and York Road in late 1948. In this context, the embankment wall would be continued from the County Hall to Waterloo Bridge, Belvedere Road was to be improved, and a concert hall was to be built (Anonymous 1948a, p. 374; Casson 1950, p. 372). The LCC intended to create a cultural and administrative centre between Hungerford and Waterloo Bridges, which was going to be designed by the LCC architect, Robert Matthew (Anonymous 1948a, p. 374). This centre could become the means to overcome the traditional unwillingness to cross the river by people in search of pleasure and refreshment, as Southwark was once an active recreation centre but for several centuries, though the South Bank was as near to the Strand as Piccadilly, the river had been an impassable psychological barrier (Editorial 1948d, p. 525). This latter fact must be considered as the meeting point of the various aspects suggested at those years for South Bank development, according

² The following were members: Misha Black, Central Office of Information, Hugh Casson, Director of Architecture, Town Planning and Building Research, Ian Cox, Director of Science and Technology, James Gardner, James Holland, Central Office of Information, Dudley Ryder, Council of Industrial Design and Ralph Tubbs (Anonymous 1948b, p. 374).

to which the holding of the 1951 Exhibition there should have done much to break this barrier down.

The Exhibition took place between May and September 1951. In architectural terms, it was characterised a triumph of Modern Architecture (Anonymous 1951, pp. 508–510). This led the editors of *AJ* to state in their leading article, that (Editorial 1951a, pp. 619–620) for the last 20 years it had been evident in the country that, in the dreary battle of styles, Modern Architecture was slowly but inevitably winning. Also, that the 1951 Festival as a whole, and in particular the Lansbury and South Bank exhibitions, were showing the nation just how worthwhile modern design could be. Lastly, the Modern Architecture in the mass (surprisingly enough, state approved and sponsored) had well and truly arrived, and the people loved it.

Another, indirect, recognition of the success of this architectural experiment was the fact of Hugh Casson's appointment as a consultant to the government on the immediate future of the South Bank site. Casson had in collaboration with LCC architect, Robert Matthew, and the chief officer of the Parks Department, Huddart, to jointly submit a report under the term of reference (Astragal 1951, p. 515; PRO file HLG 71/1574 (1951) "London County Council, South Bank Site...": 1) to examine those parts of the South Bank Exhibition which might be made accessible to the public as gardens or other open space, and to advise the LCC in consultation with the Festival Office how the existing assets could most suitably and economically be put to use in the interim scheme towards the development of the Council's proposals for the future of this area as a public open space.

But, what then was the policy-making process which converted South Bank Exhibition site to a place with permanent installations?

Both the Foreign Secretary and the Lord Privy Seal were anxious to counter the widespread impression that after the Exhibition closed, the South Bank would relapse to a slum, and they probably wished to issue a statement on these lines on or about the 28 September 1951, so that it could be taken into account when the results of the Festival were reviewed (PRO file HLG 71/1574 (1951) "Letter of Max Nicholson..."). At any rate, it was clear that after the closing of the South Bank Exhibition the way was open to the next stage of the development of the area along the general lines envisaged in the County London plan (PRO file HLG 71/1574 (1951) "Future of the South Bank site: Proposed...": 1).

As a result, a Working Party on the Winding up of the South Bank Exhibition was appointed by the Lord Privy Seal to prepare proposals for the disposal of the exhibits and buildings on the South Bank site before work began on the new permanent buildings (PRO file HLG 71/1574 (1951) "Working Party on the ..."). Among other proposals, the Working Party recommended that the major part of the section of the site upstream from Charring Cross railway bridge should be handed over to the Ministry of Works as soon as the exhibits had been removed from the Festival buildings, in order that the Ministry could proceed at once with certain urgent defence work which would eventually form part of the permanent Government building (PRO file HLG 71/1574 (1951) "Future of the South Bank site: Memorandum...").

The Lord Privy Seal disagreed with the above recommendation on three grounds: first, because he thought that it would be a mistake to proceed with the idea of a Government building on the South Bank site; second, he thought that it would be another mistake to start excavation work until full plans for the scheme had been published and were known to be acceptable to public opinion and third, he feared that in practise there would be a long interval after the excavations and before the superstructure of the building could proceed during which the site would be closed to the public and would remain an eyesore (PRO file HLG 71/1574 (1951) "Future of the South Bank site: Memorandum...").

The joint report by the LCC Architect, the Chief Officer of the Parks Department and Hugh Casson was ready for submission on 8 November 1951 (PRO file HLG 71/1574 (1951) "London County Council, South Bank Site..."), (hereafter cited as the "Casson Report"). According to its recommendations the South Bank site was divided into five zones, as follows: Zone 1 was the Riverside Promenade.³ Zone 2 was that of the Homes and Gardens.⁴ Zone 3 was that of the Station Gate.⁵ Zone 4 was that of the Ministry of Works.⁶ Finally, Zone 5 was that of Chicheley Street.⁷

Commending the Casson Report, the Working Party on the Winding up of the South Bank Exhibition recommended, among its other suggestions to the Minister of Works, that the proposals in the Casson Report for the layout of the fence dividing the upstream section of the riverside promenade should be studied sympathetically (PRO file HLG 71/1574 (1951) "Working Party on the Winding-up...": 10 & 19). But, an even more important consideration was the proposal to use the Station Gate as a passenger-handling terminal for British European Airways (BEA), because it would help the South Bank to achieve "an active and useful working life of its own".

³ Zone 1 included the Shot Tower, which was the most easily and quickly transformed from its exhibition use into an attractive public open space and whose existing character should, if was recommended, be kept (PRO file HLG 71/1574 (1951) "London County Council, South Bank Site...": 4).

⁴ Zone 2 laid between Belvedere Road and York Road downstream of Hungerford Bridge, and although not directly associated with riverside views, had important visual links with the Thames and the Royal Festival Hall; it was suggested that the existing layout and type of structure of this zone gave it the opportunity to be treated in part as an extension of the riverside promenade in the form of gardens, bandstand and terraces, and in part for commercial use (PRO file HLG 71/1574 1951 "London County Council, South Bank Site...": 4–5).

⁵ Zone 3 had the probability that it would be taken over by British European Airways, with its bus and car parks and general circulation areas (PRO file HLG 71/1574 1951 "London County Council, South Bank Site...": 5).

⁶ In zone 4 they had assumed that the whole of this area was required by the Ministry of Works for building operations, with access from Belvedere Road (PRO file HLG 71/1574 1951 "London County Council, South Bank Site...": 5).

⁷ Zone 5 although it was a small area lying outside the Exhibition boundaries was, it was suggested, to be the subject of a separate detailed recommendation (PRO file HLG 71/1574 1951 "London County Council, South Bank Site...": 5).

In the context of these discussions, the proposal of the Minister of Civil Aviation, Lord Ogmores, for the establishment of an air stop for helicopters on the South Bank, is of interest. In the Minister's view, there were three sites in the area any of which could be suitable for an air stop; the best of them was probably the area immediately downstream from Waterloo Bridge, known as the "Lower Ground", which at that time was occupied by a blitz debris crushing plant and had been earmarked for a Science Centre; the second site was known as the "Upper Ground" including the News Chronicle Printing Works and Bowaters Paper Depot and some smaller properties and the third one was the "up river" site on which government offices were due ultimately to be constructed (PRO file HLG 71/1574 (1951) "An Airstop on the South Bank: Memorandum..."). However, the suggestion met a negative response from an official of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, named Philips, who stated that the suggestion of siting an airstop on the South Bank was incompatible with the policy for making this part of the South Bank a Cultural Centre.

Further opposition came from the representatives of the LCC, who took the line that any suggestion of a permanent air stop and probably even of a temporary one would be strongly resisted "because of the noise and nuisance" (PRO file HLG 71/1574 (1951) "Letter of Lord Ogmores to...").

Dame Evelyn Sharp, who became Deputy Secretary in the Ministry of Local Government and Planning in 1951, and as such was the first woman civil servant to have charge of a ministry, came to the same view (Anonymous 1955c, p. 283). She pointed out that the intention, dating from the Abercrombie Plan, was that the South Bank should be brought into the life of London, made a place of public resort by day and by night, the river (at this point) becoming a unifying force (like the Seine) instead of a barrier (PRO file HLG 71/1574 (1952) "Airstop on the South Bank, signed...").

In the meantime, the proposal to form a British Science Centre in London had been announced by Herbert Morrison, the Chairman of the LCC, in the House of Commons on 21 November 1950 (PRO file HLG 71/1575 (1952) "South Bank Redevelopment ..."). The floor space requirements totaled nearly 800,000 square feet gross, as Table 14.1.

Furthermore, the Minister of Works had consulted the Ministry of Housing and Local Government informally that an international conference centre would be the most suitable of all the suggested developments for the South Bank site (PRO file HLG 71/1575, (1952) "Letter sent by David Eccles to...")

By April 1952, the situation in connection with the long-term redevelopment of the South Bank site had reached in a confused and uncertain point (PRO file HLG 71/1575 (1952) "Redevelopment of the South Bank: Memorandum...": 1). However, it had been made clear that for present purposes the South Bank site was considered to contain the following three areas of land: first, that which extended between County Hall and Hungerford Bridge; second, that between Hungerford Bridge and Waterloo Bridge and third, that immediately below the Waterloo Bridge.

It was also clear that in the first area the LCC wanted to develop with public buildings, at any rate in part, so as to provide a fitting neighbour for County Hall,

Table 14.1 The floor space requirements totaled for South Bank redevelopment

	Floor space required (sq. ft.)	
	(Net)	(Gross)
1. National Scientific Library (including patent office library)	141,000	163,000
2. Patent office	126,000	180,000
3. Department of Scientific and Industrial Research	56,000	80,000
4. Research bodies (including Agricultural Research Council, Medical Research Council, Natural Conservatory)	38,000	54,000
5. Learned societies (in total 16)	220,000	280,000
6. Common accommodation	8,000	10,000
7. Storage	77,000	
Total	666,000	767,000

Source PRO file HLG 71/1575 (1952) “South bank redevelopment ...”

and also to secure an economic return on the land. Moreover, this area was considered as a magnificent one which would in particular be ideal for the proposed conference centre for which no comparable site could be found in Central London. Another suggestion was that part of this site might be used for the building of a hotel, particularly if the idea of a conference centre was proceeded with (PRO file HLG 71/1575 (1952) “Redevelopment of the South Bank: Memorandum...”: 3–4).

In the second area, the Royal Festival Hall was already built (Fig. 14.3), while the land fronting the river between the Hall and Waterloo Bridge had been earmarked for the future National Theatre (Fig. 14.4). Apart from the National Theatre site, there was no specific Government interest affecting that area and no immediate question arose for decision, so the future layout and its development was a matter for the LCC as planning authority and owner.

Fig. 14.3 The royal festival hall. (Photo the author, January 2014)



Fig. 14.4 The national theatre. (Photo the author, January 2014)



Finally, the third area, which was partly derelict and belonged to the Duchy of Cornwall (PRO file *HLG 71/1575* (1952) “Redevelopment of the South Bank: Memorandum...”, 1 and 4–5), had been earmarked for the building by the Government of a Science Centre which would also include the Patent Office and its Library, which would be developed as a National Scientific Library. This Centre would also be the home of the Royal Society and some 20 learned societies, most of which were at that time inadequately housed in Burlington House. It was this third area, which the Ministry of Civil Aviation had, however, suggested for (at any rate temporary) use as a helicopter stop for the operation of services to Paris, Amsterdam, etc., as well as to different parts of Great Britain.

Another important consideration affecting the South Bank site by 1952 was the fact that the redevelopment of the above three areas was intended by the LCC, as planning authority, to be the first stage of their long-term scheme for the comprehensive redevelopment of the whole of the South Bank from Westminster Bridge to London Bridge. The general intention was that the whole of this river frontage should be laid out with new buildings for public, cultural, office and commercial purposes, together with provision for public open space and improved roads, so as to give the South Bank a character and appearance that would worthily match that of the North Bank and as befitted this magnificent stretch of the river in the very heart of London. So, how did the above policy decisions on components of the South Bank site redevelopment relate to the corresponding situation in town planning terms?

As it has already been mentioned, Abercrombie and Forshaw suggested in 1943—in the context of their County of London plan—a comprehensive reconstruction scheme for the riverside area, with sites for public buildings, offices, theatres and gardens. After the war, the LCC prepared plans for the whole of the South Bank, Southwark Bridge to Vauxhall Bridge, and in the Administrative County of London Development Plan the area was zoned for public buildings and was shown bisected by a widened Belvedere Road with provision for an open space strip, 30 feet wide, on the river side of the road and a strip affording access from the riverside open

space to Belvedere and York Roads (PRO file HLG 71/1575 (1953) "London County Council: Extract from...").

Additionally, in the Development Plan, submitted to the Minister of Housing and Local Government, the site had been characterised as a Comprehensive Development Area, under the Town and Country Planning Act 1947 (Anonymous 1953, p. 502). However, immediately after the Festival of Britain was over, the LCC, anxious to enable the public to continue its enjoyment of the riverside amenities, carried out a temporary scheme, laying out the site with lawns, flower beds and paved walks with provision for adults' and children's recreation and amusement (Anonymous 1953, pp. 501–502, 504 and 506). Meanwhile, work had started on plans for the permanent development of the site. In this context, the LCC's Town Planning Division prepared a scheme, under the direction of the Architect to the Council, Martin, the Senior Planning Officer, Arthur Ling, the Assistant Senior Planning Officer, Reconstruction Areas, Johnson-Marshall, and a team of ten more persons. The proposals of this plan were circulated in October, 1953, and they had the following main features.

The basic conception of the scheme was the grouping of a number of large public and office buildings in such a way as to give a feeling of spaciousness and vitality at a focal point on the south bank of the river, and to present to the moving eye of the Londoner a continuously interesting series of visual compositions, both in height and depth. The scheme was proposed to have three levels: ground level for pedestrians and essential vehicular access, a lower level for vehicle parking, and an upper one for a pedestrian promenade and intercommunication from building to building, extending right across the site from Waterloo Bridge to the BEA Air Terminal and to Waterloo Station at platform level. The scheme was bisected by the Hungerford Railway Bridge into "upstream" and "downstream" sectors.

In the upstream sector, behind the gardens, the National Theatre and a new hotel were sited, while between Belvedere Road and York Road a large office complex and the BEA Air Terminal was proposed. The buildings were grouped to form major interconnected "places", one of which lay around Theatre Square and the other around Terminal Square. The dominating feature of this sector was a tall office building 25 storeys high. Careful thought had been given to the contribution these buildings could make towards the river scene. So, from the Victoria Embankment, one would see an asymmetrical composition designed essentially in three dimensions, while walking through Theatre Square one would catch a glimpse of the BEA Air Terminal. Between the high office building and the National Theatre, and entering Terminal Square, one would find that it was enclosed on all four sides. It was suggested that over the roof of Waterloo Station, there should be a Helicopter Air Stop, with provision for access to and from the BEA Air Terminal.

Simultaneously, it was proposed that the downstream sector should have two major squares, one would be paved and the other green. The Royal Festival Hall was linked with an International Conference Centre to be built alongside Waterloo Bridge. It was intended that the whole complex could in fact be used as a single unit or as separate buildings. Lastly, special emphasis had been placed on the needs of

pedestrians, and, indeed, the whole river front had been given over to them. According to the suggested planning controls for this part of the South Bank Comprehensive Development Area, it had been zoned for Public Buildings as the predominant use and “programmed” in the first 5 year period. The plot ratio was 5:1 over the whole sector, but the comprehensive nature of the development under one ownership had given the opportunity of varying the floor space on each site so as to give the best architectural result and the maximum amount of open space. Moreover, the scheme had been developed in accordance with the introduced Day-lighting Controls.

According to the above scheme in its wider setting and in the context of the details of the three-dimensional arrangement, Gordon Stephenson pointed out that as the Development Plan for the County of London allowed for a theoretical 15 % increase in office accommodation (Stephenson 1954, pp. 5–6):

[...] One may well ask what will be the effect on the London plans if the City, which housed some half-million office workers, the south bank and the City of Westminster are to go on increasing in volume of building. Traffic congestion threatens to bring central London to a standstill. It can only be relieved in some small measure at a fantastic cost, and already there is the most serious threat that five of the great squares will be annihilated for the sake of parking relatively few cars, partly at the expense of the country's taxpayers and some London ratepayers [...].

That is, Stephenson defined the issue of the general consequences of such a development with central uses on the South Bank site. For this reason, he also added that if the south bank reclamation was to proceed apace, and all the arguments were in favour, it should be accompanied by a reduction in the total of working accommodation in the cities of London and Westminster. Without this redistribution of building, and values, decentralisation would merely lengthen the journeys to work and increase fatigue, frustration and central congestion.

The above observations have to be accounted as of great importance for the effects of the South Bank site redevelopment, because they defined some more general dimensions for the attempt to upgrade this part of South Central London. But, what problems emerged in endeavouring to turn the plans into reality?

The first negative development was that BEA decided to build their Air Terminal elsewhere. However, this development had its good side too, as it was decided that the site was unsuitable for the landing of helicopters, on grounds of noise, as it was proved by an extensive research study carried out by the LCC (Johnson-Marshall 1966, p. 184). On the other hand, the first large building to be erected, after the scheme was published in 1954, was the LCC's extension to the North Block of its own headquarters.

This was followed up by the Shell Petroleum Company building complex in 1956,⁸ which however was considered a deep architectural disappointment as it was characterised the “South Bank's Vertical Failure” (Anonymous 1956b, p. 466). The

⁸ The building was designed by Howard Robertson, who was one of the team of designers of the UN Secretariat, the glass-sided slab of offices in New York, which set a standard for post-war office building (Anonymous 1956b, p. 466).

architectural design of the monumental, stone-faced, Shell building went backwards instead of forwards for its inspiration (Fig. 14.5) (Johnson-Marshall 1966, p. 185).

Furthermore, the National Theatre remained on paper for several years owing to lack of money, but it became reality in late 1960s. In 1961, the LCC announced that the Royal Festival Hall itself would be considerably extended and that the Cultural Centre, which had been proposed to be adjacent to it, would be carried out; the latter was to include a small Concert Hall for 1,100 people and a large Exhibition Gallery. Lastly, after negotiations the St Thomas's Hospital also erected a big project across Westminster Bridge Road from County Hall in the late 1960s.

Having a final look on the progress of South Bank project, the scheme was developed over a 20 year period and that execution was characterised by financial restrictions, by the high plot ratio permitted and implemented, and by the lack of architecture of high quality within the Comprehensive Development Area.

Fig. 14.5 The Shell petroleum company building complex. (Photo the author, January 2014)



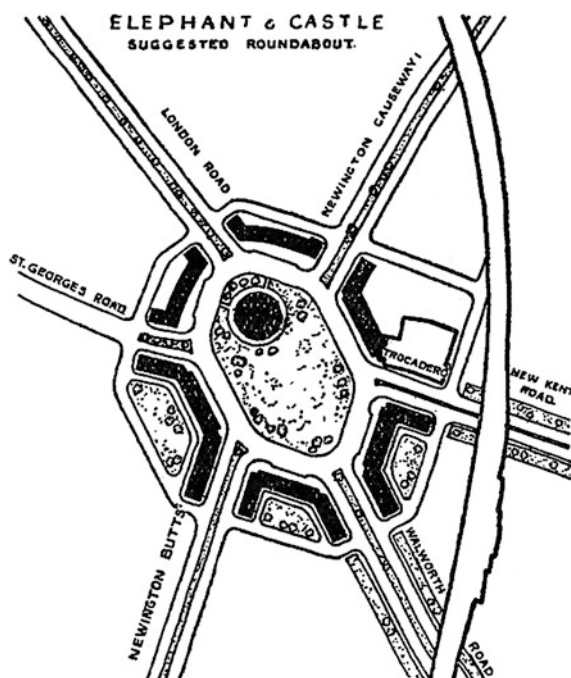
14.4 The Elephant and Castle Project

If the South Bank was the “facade” of the attempt to extend cultural, commercial and administrative uses in the south part of Central London, the Elephant and Castle could be considered as its “heart”; in the sense that if this latter project was successful, then the underlying motive of up-grading the south part of Central London would also be achieved.

The Elephant and Castle area, which took its name from an old coaching inn erected in 1760 and rebuilt first in 1818 and again in 1898, was a considerable centre, which however by 1940 had become hopelessly congested (Johnson-Marshall 1966, pp. 185 and 258), and an important road junction south of the Thames, where the roads from Lambeth, Westminster, Waterloo and Blackfriars Bridges converge, before joining the Kent Road. Like the other main traffic focal points in London, Elephant and Castle needed urgent re-planning to enable it to deal efficiently with the growing number of vehicles using it. The opportunity was given by the war destructions the area suffered, which made it possible to create not only a major improvement in traffic terms, but also a new centre for this part of London.

A first attempt to face the Elephant and Castle area’s problems is contained in the County of London plan, 1943 (Fig. 14.6). It had proposed a traffic solution to the junction of six main roads and a coordinated architectural treatment of the surrounding buildings, while in the centre of the resulting hexagonal roundabout a large public building would be built (Forshaw and Abercrombie 1943, p. 138).

Fig. 14.6 The Elephant and Castle: sketch plan of a roundabout suggested in the context of the LCC plan for London (Source Forshaw and Abercrombie 1943, p. 138)



Johnson-Marshall supported that this treatment of the Elephant and Castle area by the County of London plan was: “an academic exercise in grand manner planning”. Actually, this proposal ran counter to the creative character of the whole concept of the County of London plan.

More systematic planning work started after the definition of an area about 30 acres around the Elephant and Castle site as a Comprehensive Development Area in the context of the Administrative County of London Development Plan, 1951. However, this project got off to a slow start, possibly because only part of the land was in the ownership of the Council (Johnson-Marshall 1966, p. 186). In any case, in the early 1950s no private developer was willing to risk money in the hinterland of South London, when there were so many other profitable sites to exploit, as for example those in the West End. The first comprehensive development scheme was designed in 1954. As Johnson-Marshall pointed out (1966, p. 187), when they were considering its future during the preparation of the 1951 Development Plan, Arthur Ling and himself suggested that it might be turned into a bold multi-level inter-section of a parkway type.

However, the above proposal met with favour neither from the traffic experts on financial grounds nor from the property experts on grounds of the potential loss of property values. The substantial existing buildings also presented difficulties, coupled with the unwillingness of the London Passenger Transport Board to pay for the combining of their two separate underground stations and surface ticket offices into one. Finally, it was the Ministry of Transport which decided that the traffic intersection should be resolved by a single level roundabout. This development should be considered as representative of the limited governmental intervention in the Elephant and Castle project. In the event, the 1953 scheme was reduced to creating some degree of order in the development, with one high building acting as a focal point.

Anyway, the LCC decided to intervene and in fact made it an attractive proposition for development. It occurred when the LCC held limited competitions for the other available sites. The first was for the commercial area on the north-east, which included the Trocadero Cinema as an apparently fixed element. Another limited competition was held for the central shopping centre site (Johnson-Marshall 1966, pp. 186–187 and 262). In addition to laying out the new road junction with its pedestrian underpasses, stairs and ramps, the proposed London College of Printing, specialised Technical College, was moved up to the prominent site adjoining the large roundabout and the design was prepared for it by the Schools Division of the LCC Architect's Department. This led to a revised scheme for the area in 1960. The roundabout remained unexcavated but it contained a memorial to Faraday. Furthermore, there were no less than five building ensembles in the new composition, instead of the single one in the original scheme.

In architectural terms, the result of this comprehensive redevelopment scheme was extremely poor. The London College of Printing, and the Shopping Centre were formulated as very simple tall buildings according to the Modern Architecture rules, while Alexander Fleming House, which belongs to the Department of Health

and Social Security, lying between Borough High Street and New Kent Road is a more interesting modernistic building.

Nevertheless, in the above “empty” architectural composition there still remains a building at the corner of London Road showing the traditional architectural character of this urban district on the one hand and, on the other, the road to the City of London. This latter is a unique element which has remained to remind us of the unsuccessful endeavours of the post-war architects and planners to connect sufficiently the “poorer” south and the “richer” north parts of Central London, on the two banks of the Thames.

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Chapter 15

Conclusion

Abstract The Conclusion epitomises the British reconstruction experience of the 1940s and 1950s, and the general characteristics of this activity, considered from a town planning and architectural viewpoint. Moreover, the rebuilding of Central London, and especially in those areas of comprehensive development, failed to achieve great architectural works.

During the 1940s and 1950s, the British planning scene was dominated by an urban reconstruction activity. A basic aim of this creative era was to solve the intractable problem of the redevelopment of the towns in a radical way and especially in those urban parts where established capital values were at their highest. Actually, the town centres were not normally subject to planning schemes until that period. In the 1920s, and particularly in the 1930s, they were being redeveloped by private enterprise to meet the growing demand for shopping and office accommodation, and the result was entirely piecemeal.

In the 1930s and 1940s, some governmental commissions recommended planning policies and procedures that became the basis for the modern British planning system. The most important were the Barlow Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population, the Scott Committee on the Preservation of Agricultural land, the Uthwatt Committee on Compensation for Nationalisation of Land Development Rights and the Reith Committee on New Towns. These were incorporated into law by the post-war Labour Government. In addition, the suggested plans for London were also important elements influencing planning in theory and practice. One must take account that it was the crucial period of the Great Depression that did not allow major investments but it gave the opportunity for decisions to be taken concerning the future regional restructuring of the country, as well as, the re-planning of London. The policies of urban containment, Green Belts, decentralisation and the creation of New Towns were a product of this era.

Certainly, such a target as the planned redevelopment of a city centre was very difficult to achieve. From this point of view, this whole decision and effort are to be seen as a massive task of great importance. It was all the more significant in that this activity gave a strong impulsion to the evolution of the British planning system and through it to the international one. A crucial question in this endeavour was the

redevelopment of London and especially of Central London in both the City and the West End, the comprehensive rebuilding of its war-damaged areas, and the connection of its two parts lying respectively on the north and the south banks of the Thames.

Our method of approaching this great initiative has been organised on the assumption that it must be examined at two levels: first, as a system of conceptualisation and implementation in the context of its historical circumstances, and second, in each of the above sectors, separately. The conclusions of our analysis could be described as follows.

Regarding the establishment of the reconstruction machinery, it may be summarised that the whole conception of such a governmental instrument was the apotheosis of public intervention in the town planning sector; in the sense that, according to the legislation introduced, the initiative in planning choice terms was a privilege of central and local government; in this context, the public participation as well as the multicultural view was very limited (Sandercock 1998). This fact, in conjunction with the widespread -at that time- idea of comprehensive planning, leads us to the conclusion that the character of the established reconstruction machinery was essentially a sweeping one. Because of this nature of the reconstruction machinery, a kind of contradiction emerged in relation to the character of the British socio-economic system. The British society and economy were and are based on a pluralistic pattern of organisation. This means that the framework of the system is wide and gives many possibilities to everybody for action. However, it presents some limits which cannot be exceeded; it is a kind of equilibrium which permits the whole system to fluctuate between private and mixed economy. In this logic of organisation, the conceptualisation of the post-war reconstruction machinery was polarised more to one side, that of the mixed economy. From this point of view, it came into confrontation with the above very wide limits of British society and it met its first difficulties in implementation terms.

As a consequence, although the Barlow Report suggestions of 1940 found the people, to quote Hall (1985b, p. 8), “ready to leave” on the one hand and, on the other, the State mature enough to accept the establishment of a Central Planning Authority, in the form of a new Ministry with town and regional planning terms of reference, and even more, while British society proved also ready to accept the pioneering recommendations contained in the Scott Report of 1942, referring to the need for the preservation of rural amenities and life in a period when the urban reconstruction and growth were a crucial issue—a fact which led Wibberley (1985, p. 13) to characterise the Scott Report as “a text for all time”—the previous two and the Uthwatt Report’s proposals, which make up the third part of the trilogy on which the post-war reconstruction machinery had been based, moved far away from the crucial point of equilibrium in the British socio-economic system. Better, quoting Parker (1985, p. 21), they became “the end of the road”.

Another significant aspect of the introduced reconstruction machinery was that the central government had decided to play a narrow role in the urban reconstruction activity. Actually, the established Central Planning Authority in February 1943, which took the form of a Ministry with main objective to prepare the legislation concerning town and country planning and especially land policy,

transferred gradually the basic responsibility on these matters to the local authorities. This development is obvious in the Planning Acts of 1944 and of 1947. Of course, this choice had many positive practical implications; however, it also became very soon the cause of a more serious deficiency in the whole system: that of raising the necessary financial sources to be implanted in the urban development projects.

As a matter of fact, under the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947, which was the statutory expression of the above proposals, all development rights were vested in the State. Owners were required to apply for permission when they wished to develop their land, and when permission was given a “development charge” was imposed which taxed away the development value at the rate of 100 per cent; furthermore, as the officials were not ready enough to plan on the scale introduced by the post-war planning system, the development charge delayed building, having so a negative function in implementation terms. Even more, no compensation was to be paid for the lost development values that existed on the enactment date but a fund of £ 300,000,000 was set aside to meet cases of hardship that might result. So, as those decisions were the result of the “golden age” of planning, they were in a high degree utopian theses, which according to Hall (1985b, pp. 3 and 5) are indications of “the planners ignoring trends”. This was a main reason why, although the post-war planning system as introduced was bold and clear in its conception, it became problematic when the implementation period came and it led the State to call it in the case of London’s reconstruction officially (PRO file HLG 71/1342): “our great planning failure”. As Peter Hall noted (1973: vol II, p. 408), the planning system introduced by the 1947 Act was too inflexible to cope with the unexpectedly dynamic socio-economic and demographic changes. As a result, we could legitimately conclude that the above strengths and, simultaneously, weaknesses of the planning legislation were the reasons which led to the political pressures which changed it drastically after 1951.

On the other hand, the conception of comprehensive planning gave the opportunity to realise in this period, important planning proposals for the British towns and above all for London. This, certainly, could be accounted as a positive outcome of the influence of the widespread thesis in the 1940s in favour of public intervention in planning matters. As a consequence, it is not by chance that the most famous plans for the future of London were produced during the 1940s in the context of the war and the first post-war years. Indeed, this fruitful period in town planning terms was a result of the collaboration between eminent town planners and the State, as well as of the mutual influences and competition developed among the various groups of town planners. In this context of unofficial and semi-official debate developed in those years should be sought the reason why the London plans were of high quality according to the comprehensive planning principles of the time. Even though it did not contain aspects concerning the community-driven and community-based planning. Actually, although some of the plans had been undertaken by private associations or institutions, the majority of them were a result of public initiative at the central and/or the local government level. This fact proves additionally the established connection between the conception of the comprehensive planning aspect in

both the reconstruction machinery formation and the technique of town plans preparation.

Another important point was that, even if they had been prepared by different groups of planners, the fact that some of them were members of more than one planning team and/or were at the same time participating in official Committees investigating various planning issues -as for example Professor Patrick Abercrombie, Professor William Holford and Dr Charles Holden and some others—it undoubtedly gave a unified and continuum character to this planning endeavour. From this point of view, the six plans prepared for London, apart from the fact that they express similar planning philosophy, that of comprehensive redevelopment of defined parts of London and of the whole city as an entity, simultaneously they were parts of the same planning endeavour.

As a result, if an overall glance will be given at the succession of them, it should be distinguished that they can be divided into three subunits. The first one includes the MARS, RA and LRRC plans. This subunit is characterised by the statement of a variety of aspects and ideas referring to the future growth of London. It could be said that this coincides with the submission of the “preliminary” or “preparatory” stage of the whole planning procedure. The second subunit contains the LCC and the GL plans. These were characterised by maturity and cohesiveness and from this optical angle these could be regarded as being at the stage of submission of the “definitive” proposals for future London. Finally, the third subunit consists of the CLD plan, which had an operational and practical character and, in a way, corresponds to the “implementation” stage of the whole planning procedure.

Nevertheless, the implementation stage of the re-planning of London contained suggestions for the rebuilding of its central area as well. Among them, the proposals for the City of London prepared mainly by Holden and Holford were of particular value. This is because they left the level of general and theoretical proposals and formulated specific solutions for the inner city problems. In this framework, the introduced innovations concerning the control of urban densities and the hygiene of way of living and office accommodation in the town centres, might be considered of great importance in planning technique terms. Especially, because they suggested solutions to face the crucial problems of Central London and they influenced the international way of solving some of the inner city’s town planning questions through the introduction of the “plot ratio” and the “daylight” controls. The criticism which could be raised on this task derives from the point that the introduced rates of plot ratio were high enough; meanwhile, in some cases, especially in St Paul’s Cathedral district, maybe a drastic reduction of them should have been adopted. As an outcome, the “great opportunity”, which had appeared by the war destruction for the revitalisation of Central London as a whole, had been lost in high degree, as the core of the metropolis preserved the most of its pre-war urban functions, mainly in urban density and traffic terms.

At the same time, the rebuilding of Central London presented two other facets. The first one refers to the quantitative degree and the rapidity of the application of various projects of comprehensive development in the core of London; the other one concerns the attempt of up-grading the south part of London’s central district,

that is that lying on the South Bank of Thames, as well as the Elephant and Castle area. As far as the first attempt undertaken is concerned, it is a fact that many of the programmed schemes in the damaged areas of Central London were carried out in a more or less satisfactory way, although there were admittedly many financial difficulties and a deficiency in building materials. However, this could not be said of the second endeavour. Actually, although the suggested proposals for the South Bank and the Elephant and Castle areas could be characterised as very successful in town planning terms of the day, the target of the unification of Central London has not been reached. The metropolis of Britain continues to be divided into two parts with different levels of development and land values.

Moreover, the rebuilding of Central London, and especially in those areas of comprehensive development, failed to achieve great architectural works. In the 1980s, the criticism of the material outcome of the post-war reconstruction activity arises from the highest level of the British society, the Prince of Wales, in an article published in *The Sunday Times* on 3 September, 1989, that is a week before his book *A vision of Britain* was circulated. He characterised some of the buildings which had gone up in the past 40 years as “deformed Frankenstein monsters” (The Prince of Wales 1989, p. A13). Among them the future formation of Paternoster Square, next to St Paul’s Cathedral, became central. As an outcome, the recent reconstruction around St Paul’s attempted to correct these post-war aesthetic choices. Certainly, this kind of criticism derives from the fact that rebuilding after the war had gradually succeeded in wrecking London’s skyline and spoiling the view of St Paul’s in a jostling scrum of skyscrapers, all competing for attention (Anonymous 1989, p. 21). This rebuilding, of course, has its roots in the first post-war years, but it developed as an urban phenomenon during later decades, especially after 1960. An interesting example of such an uncontrolled development is the new Docklands of London in the 1980s, which in a way express the triumph of commercial expediency over civic values. An explanation to the above phenomenon belongs to Max Hutchinson, President of the RIBA, who argued in 1989 that “modern architects were struggling to realise building forms beyond their time” (Hutchinson 1989, p. 64).

As a consequence, that critical review of the post-war rebuilding of Central London must seek, apart from evaluating the extent of success in the implementation of the adopted modernistic architectural style, the attention to urban scale and the appropriate formation of the planning laws, to take economic factors into account as well; especially, regarding the speculative character of the developers whose criteria usually fluctuated between achieving the minimum building costs and the maximum returns from the sale of their building product. These aspects were hidden in the dark side of the whole procedure and for this reason operated effectively and determined the real rules, the wider framework and the logic according to which it was functioning and forming the man-made environment as the final result.

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